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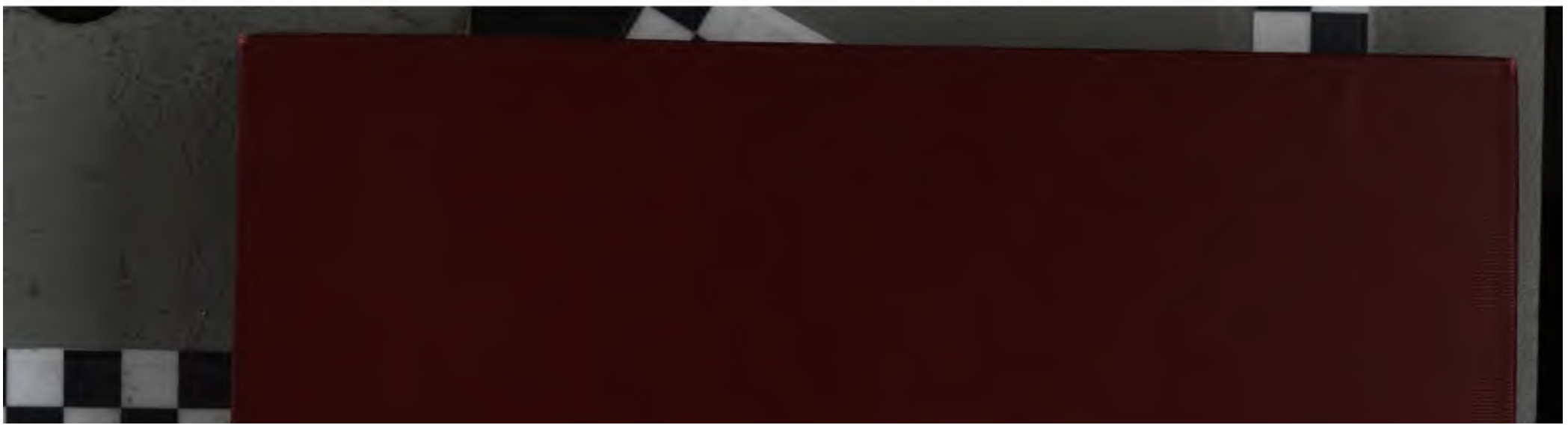

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Battle of Lake Champlain

THE
NAVAL WAR OF 1812

OR THE

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY DURING THE LAST WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN, TO WHICH IS APPENDED AN ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

By

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

VOLUME II.

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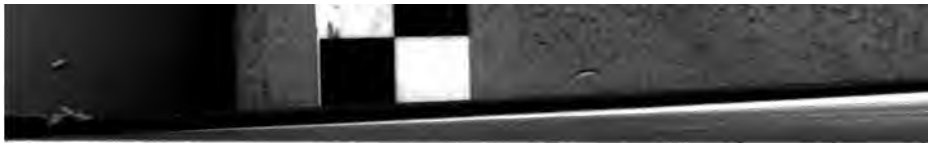

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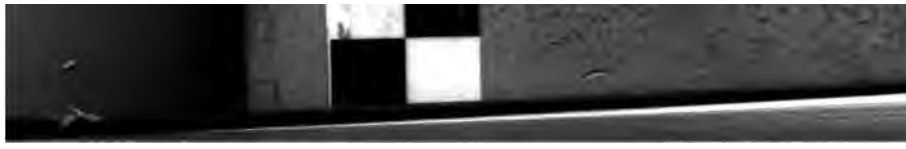

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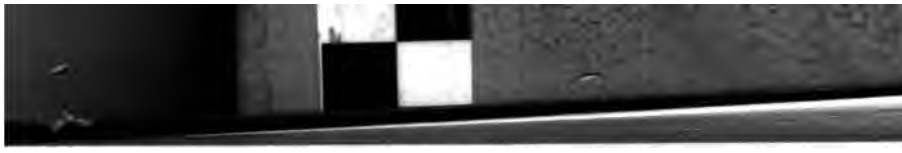


NAVAL WAR OF 1812

CHAPTER I

1814

ON THE OCEAN

Strictness of the blockade—Cruise of Rodgers—Cruise of the *Constitution*—Her unsuccessful chase of *La Pique*—Attack on the *Alligator*—The *Essex* captured—The *Frolic* captured—The *Peacock* captures the *Epervier*—Commodore Barney's flotilla—The British in the Chesapeake—The *Wasp* captures the *Reindeer* and sinks the *Avon*—Cruise and loss of the *Adams*—The privateer *General Armstrong*—The privateer *Prince de Neufchâtel*—Loss of the gunboats on Lake Borgne—Fighting near New Orleans—Summary.

DURING this year the blockade of the American coast was kept up with ever increasing rigor. The British frigates hovered like hawks off every seaport that was known to harbor any fighting craft; they almost invariably went in couples, to support one another and to lighten, as far as was possible, the severity of their work. On the northern coasts, in particular, the intense cold of the furious winter gales rendered it no easy task to keep the assigned stations; the ropes were

turned into stiff and brittle bars, the hulls were coated with ice, and many, both of men and officers, were frost-bitten and crippled. But no stress of weather could long keep the stubborn and hardy British from their posts. With ceaseless vigilance they traversed continually the allotted cruising grounds, capturing the privateers, harrying the coasters, and keeping the more powerful ships confined to port; "no American frigate could proceed singly to sea without imminent risk of being crushed by the superior force of the numerous British squadrons." [1] But the sloops of war, commanded by officers as skilful as they were daring, and manned by as hardy seamen as ever sailed salt water, could often slip out; generally, on some dark night, when a heavy gale was blowing, they would make the attempt under storm canvas, and with almost invariable success. The harder the weather, the better was their chance; once clear of the coast the greatest danger ceased, though throughout the cruise the most untiring vigilance was needed. The new sloops that I have mentioned as being built proved themselves the best possible vessels for this kind of work; they were fast enough to escape from most cruisers of superior force, and were over-matches for any British flush-decked ship, that is, for anything below the rank of the frigate-built corvettes of the *Cyane's* class. The danger of recapture was too

[1] Captain Broke's letter of challenge to Captain Lawrence.

great to permit of the prizes being sent in, so they were generally destroyed as soon as captured; and as the cruising grounds were chosen right in the track of commerce, the damage done and consternation caused were very great.

Besides the numerous frigates cruising along the coast in couples or small squadrons, there were two or three places that were blockaded by a heavier force. One of these was New London, before which cruised a squadron under the direction of Sir Thomas Hardy, in the 74-gun ship *Ramillies*. Most of the other cruising squadrons off the coast contained razees or two-deckers. The boats of the *Hogue*, 74, took part in the destruction of some coasters and fishing-boats at Pettipauge in April; and those of the *Superb*, 74, shared in a similar expedition against Wareham in June.[1] The command on the coast of North America was now given to Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane. The main British force continued to lie in the Chesapeake, where about fifty sail were collected. During the first part of this year these were under the command of Sir Robert Barrie, but in May he was relieved by Rear-Admiral Cockburn.[2]

The *President*, 44, Commodore Rodgers, at the beginning of 1814 was still out, cruising among the Barbadoes and West Indies, only making a few prizes of not much value. She then turned

[1] James, vi., 474. [2] James, vi., 437.

toward the American coast, striking soundings near St. Augustine, and thence proceeding north along the coast to Sandy Hook, which was reached on February 18th. The light was passed in the night, and shortly afterward several sail were made out, when the *President* was at once cleared for action.[1] One of these strange sail was the *Loire*, 38 (British), Captain Thomas Brown, which ran down to close the *President*, unaware of her force; but, on discovering her to be a 44, hauled to the wind and made off.[2] The *President* did not pursue, another frigate and a gun-brig being in sight.[3] This rencontre gave rise to nonsensical boastings on both sides; one American writer calls the *Loire* the *Plantagenet*, 74; James, on the other hand, states that the *President* was afraid to engage the 38-gun frigate, and that the only reason the latter declined the combat was because she was short of men. The best answer to this is a quotation from his own work (vol. vi., p. 402), that "the admiralty had issued an order that no 18-pounder frigate was voluntarily to engage one of the 24-pounder frigates of America." Coupling this order with the results of the combats that had already taken place between frigates of these classes, it can always be safely set down as sheer bravado when any talk is made of an American 44

[1] Letter of Commodore Rodgers, February 20, 1814.
[2] James, vi., 412.
[3] *Naval Monument*, p. 235.

refusing to give battle to a British 38; and it is even more absurd to say that a British line-of-battle ship would hesitate for a minute about engaging *any* frigate.

On January 1st, the *Constitution*, which had been lying in Boston harbor undergoing complete repairs, put out to sea under the command of Captain Charles Stewart. The British 38-gun frigate *Nymphe* had been lying before the port, but she disappeared long before the *Constitution* was in condition, in obedience to the order already mentioned. Captain Stewart ran down toward the Barbadoes, and on the 14th of February captured and destroyed the British 14-gun schooner *Pictou*, with a crew of seventy-five men. After making a few other prizes and reaching the coast of Guiana she turned homeward, and on the 23d of the same month fell in, at the entrance to the Mona passage, with the British 36-gun frigate *Pique* (late French *Pallas*), Captain Maitland. The *Constitution* at once made sail for the *Pique*, steering free[1]; the latter at first hauled to the wind and waited for her antagonist, but when the latter was still three miles distant she made out her force and immediately made all sail to escape; the *Constitution*, however, gained steadily till 8 P.M., when the night and thick squally weather caused her to lose sight of the chase. Captain Maitland had on board the prohibitory order

[1] Letter of Captain Stewart, April 8, 1814.

issued by the admiralty,[1] and acted correctly. His ship was altogether too light for his antagonist. James, however, is not satisfied with this, and wishes to prove that *both* ships were desirous of avoiding the combat. He says that Captain Stewart came near enough to count "13 ports and a bridle on the *Pique's* main-deck," and "saw at once that she was of a class inferior to the *Guerrière* or *Java*," but "thought the *Pique's* 18's were 24's, and therefore did not make an effort to bring her to action." He portrays very picturesquely the grief of the *Pique's* crew when they find they are not going to engage; how they come aft and request to be taken into action; how Captain Maitland reads them his instructions, but "fails to persuade them that there had been any necessity of issuing them"; and, finally, how the sailors, overcome by woe and indignation, refuse to take their supper-time grog,—which was certainly remarkable. As the *Constitution* had twice captured British frigates "with impunity," according to James himself, is it likely that she would now shrink from an encounter with a ship which she "saw at once was of an inferior class" to those already conquered? Even such abject cowards as James's Americans would not be guilty of so stupid an action. Of course, neither Captain Stewart nor any one else supposed for an instant

[1] James, vi., 477.

that a 36-gun frigate was armed with 24-pounders.

It is worth while mentioning, as an instance of how utterly untrustworthy James is in dealing with American affairs, that he says (p. 476) the *Constitution* had now "what the Americans would call a bad crew," whereas, in her previous battles, all her men had been "picked." Curiously enough, this is the exact reverse of the truth. In no case was an American ship manned with a 'picked'" crew, but the nearest approach to such was the crew the *Constitution* carried in this and the next cruise, when "she probably possessed as fine a crew as ever manned a frigate. They were principally New England men, and it has been said of them that they were almost qualified to fight the ship without her officers." [1] The statement that such men, commanded by one of the bravest and most skilful captains of our navy, would shrink from attacking a greatly inferior foe, is hardly worth while denying; and, fortunately, such denial is needless, Captain Stewart's account being fully corroborated in the *Memoir of Admiral Durham*, written by his nephew, Captain Murray, London, 1846.

The *Constitution* arrived off the port of Marblehead on April 3d, and at 7 A.M. fell in with the two British 38-gun frigates *Junon*, Captain Upton, and *Tenedos*, Captain Parker. "The American

[1] Cooper, ii., 463.

frigate was standing to the westward with the wind about north by west and bore from the two British frigates about northwest by west. The *Junon* and *Tenedos* quickly hauled up in chase, and the *Constitution* crowded sail in the direction of Marblehead. At 9.30, finding the *Tenedos* rather gaining upon her, the *Constitution* started her water and threw overboard a quantity of provisions and other articles. At 11.30 she hoisted her colors, and the two British frigates, who were now dropping slowly in the chase, did the same. At 1.30 P.M. the *Constitution* anchored in the harbor of Marblehead. Captain Parker was anxious to follow her into the port, which had no defences; but the *Tenedos* was recalled by a signal from the *Junon*."[1] Shortly afterward the *Constitution* again put out and reached Boston unmolested.

On January 29, 1814, the small U. S. coasting schooner *Alligator*, of 4 guns and 40 men, Sailing-master R. Basset, was lying at anchor in the mouth of Stone River, S. C., when a frigate and a brig were perceived close inshore near the breakers. Judging from their motions that they would attempt to cut him out when it was dark, Mr. Basset made his preparations accordingly.[2] At half-past seven six boats were observed approaching cautiously under cover of the marsh, with

[1] James, vi., 479.

[2] Letter of Sailing-master Basset, January 31, 1814.

muffled oars; on being hailed they cheered and opened with boat carronades and musketry, coming on at full speed; whereupon the *Alligator* cut her cable and made sail, the wind being light from the southwest; while the crew opened such a heavy fire on the assailants, who were then not thirty yards off, that they stopped the advance and fell astern. At this moment the *Alligator* grounded, but the enemy had suffered so severely that they made no attempt to renew the attack, rowing off down stream. On board the *Alligator* two men were killed and two wounded, including the pilot, who was struck down by a grape-shot while standing at the helm; and her sails and rigging were much cut. The extent of the enemy's loss was never known; next day one of his cutters was picked up at North Edisto, much injured and containing the bodies of an officer and a seaman.[1] For his skill and gallantry, Mr. Basset was promoted to a lieutenancy, and for a time his exploit put a complete stop to the cutting-out expeditions along that part of the coast. The *Alligator* herself sank in a squall on July 1st, but was afterward raised and refitted.

It is much to be regretted that it is almost impossible to get at the British account of any of these expeditions which ended successfully for the Americans; all such cases are generally ignored by

[1] Letter from Commander J. H. Dent, February 21, 1814.

the British historians; so that I am obliged to rely solely upon the accounts of the victors, who, with the best intentions in the world, could hardly be perfectly accurate.

At the close of 1813, Captain Porter was still cruising in the Pacific.

Early in January, the *Essex*, now with 255 men aboard, made the South American coast, and on the 12th of that month anchored in the harbor of Valparaiso. She had in company a prize, re-christened the *Essex Junior*, with a crew of 60 men, and 20 guns, ten long 6's, and ten 18-pound carronades. Of course, she could not be used in a combat with regular cruisers.

On February 8th, the British frigate *Phœbe*, 36, Captain James Hilyar, accompanied by the *Cherub* 18, Captain Thomas Tudor Tucker, the former carrying 300, and the latter 140, men,[1] made their appearance, and apparently proposed to take the *Essex* by a *coup de main*. They hauled into the harbor on a wind, the *Cherub* falling to leeward; while the *Phœbe* made the port quarters of the *Essex*, and then, putting her helm down, luffed upon her starboard bow, but ten or fifteen feet distant. Porter's crew were all at quarter, the powder-boys with slow matches ready to discharge

[1] They afterward took on board enough men from British merchant vessels to raise their complements, respectively, to 320 and 180.

the guns, the boarders standing by, cutlass in hand, to board in the smoke; everything was cleared for action on both frigates. Captain Hilyar now probably saw that there was no chance of carrying the *Essex* by surprise, and, standing on the after-gun, he inquired after Captain Porter's health; the latter returned the inquiry, but warned Hilyar not to fall foul. The British captain then braced back his yards, remarking that if he did fall aboard it would be purely accidental. "Well," said Porter, "you have no business where you are; if you touch a rope-yarn of this ship I shall board instantly." [1] The *Phœbe*, in her then position, was completely at the mercy of the American ships, and Hilyar, greatly agitated, assured Porter that he meant nothing hostile; and the *Phœbe* backed down, her yards passing over those of the *Essex* without touching a rope, and anchored half a mile astern. Shortly afterwards the two captains met on shore, when Hilyar thanked Porter for his behavior, and, on his inquiry, assured him that after thus owing his safety to the latter's forbearance, Porter need be under no apprehension as to his breaking the neutrality.

The British ships now began a blockade of the port. On February 27th, the *Phœbe* being hove to close off the port, and the *Cherub* a league to

[1] *Life of Farragut*, p. 33.

leeward, the former fired a weather-gun; the *Essex* interpreted this as a challenge, took the crew of the *Essex Junior* aboard and went out to attack the British frigate. But the latter did not await the combat; she bore up, set her studding-sails, and ran down to the *Cherub*. The American officers were intensely irritated over this, and American writers have sneered much at "a British 36 refusing combat with an American 32." But the armaments of the two frigates were so wholly dissimilar that it is hard to make comparison. When the fight really took place, the *Essex* was so crippled and the water so smooth that the British ships fought at their own distance; and as they had long guns to oppose to Porter's carronades, this really made the *Cherub* more nearly suited to contend with the *Essex* than the latter was to fight the *Phœbe*. But when the *Essex*, in fairly heavy weather, with the crew of the *Essex Junior* aboard, was to windward, the circumstances were very different; she carried as many men and guns as the *Phœbe*, and in close combat, or in a hand-to-hand struggle, could probably have taken her. Still, Hilyar's conduct in avoiding Porter except when the *Cherub* was in company was certainly over-cautious, and very difficult to explain in a man of his tried courage.

On March 27th, Porter decided to run out of the harbor on the first opportunity, so as to draw

away his two antagonists in chase, and let the *Essex Junior* escape. This plan had to be tried sooner than was expected. The two vessels were always ready, the *Essex* only having her proper complement of 255 men aboard. On the next day, the 28th, it came on to blow from the south, when the *Essex* parted her port cable and dragged the starboard anchor to leeward; so she got under way, and made sail; by several trials it had been found that she was faster than the *Phœbe*, and that the *Cherub* was very slow indeed, so Porter had little anxiety about his own ship, only fearing for his consort. The British vessels were close in with the weathermost point of the bay, but Porter thought he could weather them, and hauled up for that purpose. Just as he was rounding the outermost point, which, if accomplished, would have secured his safety, a heavy squall struck the *Essex*, and, when she was nearly gunwale under, the main-topmast went by the board. She now wore and stood in for the harbor, but the wind had shifted, and on account of her crippled condition she could not gain it; so she bore up and anchored in a small bay, three miles from Valparaiso, and half a mile from a detached Chilian battery of one gun, the *Essex* being within pistol-shot of the shore.[1] The *Phœbe* and *Cherub* now bore down upon her, covered with ensigns, union-

[1] Letter of Captain David Porter, July 3, 1814.

jacks, and motto flags; and it became evident that Hilyar did not intend to keep his word, as soon as he saw that Porter was disabled. So the *Essex* prepared for action, though there could be no chance whatever of success. Her flags were flying from every mast, and everything was made ready as far as was possible. The attack was made before springs could be got on her cables. She was anchored so near the shore as to preclude the possibility of Captain Hilyar's passing ahead of her[1]; so his two ships came cautiously down, the *Cherub* taking her position on the starboard bow of the *Essex*, and the *Phœbe* under the latter's stern. The attack began at 4 P.M.[2] Some of the bow-guns of the American frigate bore upon the *Cherub*, and, as soon as she found this out, the sloop ran down and stationed herself near the *Phœbe*. The latter had opened with her broadside of long 18's, from a position in which not one of Porter's guns could reach her. Three times springs were got on the cables of the *Essex*, in order to bring her round till her broadside bore; but in each instance they were shot away, as soon as they were hauled taut. Three long 12's were got out of the stern-ports, and with these an animated fire was kept up on the two British ships,

[1] Letter of Captain James Hilyar, March 30, 1814.

[2] Mean time. Porter says 3.54; Hilyar a few minutes past 4. The former says the first attack lasted half an hour; the latter, but ten minutes. I accordingly make it twenty.

the aim being especially to cripple their rigging. A good many of Porter's crew were killed during the first five minutes, before he could bring any guns to bear; but afterward he did not suffer much, and at 4.20, after a quarter of an hour's fight between the three long 12's of the *Essex* and the whole 36 broadside guns of the *Phœbe* and *Cherub*, the latter were actually driven off. They wore, and again began with their long guns; but, these producing no visible effect, both of the British ships hauled out of the fight at 4.30. "Having lost the use of mainsail, jib, and mainstay, appearances looked a little inauspicious," writes Captain Hilyar. But the damages were soon repaired, and his two ships stood back for the crippled foe. Both stationed themselves on her port quarter, the *Phœbe* at anchor, with a spring, firing her broadside, while the *Cherub* kept under way, using her long bow-chasers. Their fire was very destructive, for they were out of reach of the *Essex's* carronades, and not one of her long guns could be brought to bear on them. Porter now cut his cable, at 5.20, and tried to close with his antagonists. After many ineffectual efforts, sail was made. The flying-jib halyards were the only serviceable ropes uncut. That sail was hoisted, and the fore-topsail and foresail let fall, though the want of sheets and tacks rendered them almost useless. Still the *Essex* drove down on her assail-

ants, and for the first time got near enough to use her carronades; for a minute or two the firing was tremendous, but after the first broadside the *Cherub* hauled out of the fight in great haste, and during the remainder of the action confined herself to using her bow-guns from a distance. Immediately afterward, the *Phœbe* also edged off, and by her superiority of sailing, her foe being now almost helpless, was enabled to choose her own distance, and again opened from her long 18's, out of range of Porter's carronades.[1] The carnage on board the *Essex* had now made her decks look like shambles. One gun was manned three times, fifteen men being slain at it; its captain alone escaped without a wound. There were but one or two instances of flinching; the wounded, many of whom were killed by flying splinters while under the hands of the doctors, cheered on their comrades, and themselves worked at the guns like fiends as long as they could stand. At one of the bow-guns was stationed a young Scotchman, named Bissly, who had one leg shot off close

[1] American writers often sneer at Hilyar for keeping away from the *Essex*, and out of reach of her short guns; but his conduct was eminently proper in this respect. It was no part of his duty to fight the *Essex* at the distance which *best* suited her; but, on the contrary, at that which *least* suited her. He, of course, wished to win the victory with the least possible loss to himself, and acted accordingly. His conduct in the action itself could not be improved upon.

by the groin. Using his handkerchief as a tourniquet, he said, turning to his American shipmates: "I left my own country and adopted the United States, to fight for her. I hope I have this day proved myself worthy of the country of my adoption. I am no longer of any use to you or to her, so good-by!" With these words he leaned over the sill of the port, and threw himself overboard.[1] Among the very few men who flinched was one named William Roach; Porter sent one of his midshipmen to shoot him, but he was not to be found. He was discovered by a man named William Call, whose leg had been shot off and was hanging by the skin, and who dragged the shattered stump all round the bag-house, pistol in hand, trying to get a shot at him. Lieut. J. G. Cowell had his leg shot off above the knee, and his life might have been saved had it been amputated at once; but the surgeons already had rows of wounded men waiting for them, and when it was proposed to him that he should be attended to out of order, he replied: "No, doctor, none of that; fair play's a jewel. One man's life is as dear as another's; I would not cheat any poor fellow out of his turn." So he stayed at his post, and died from loss of blood.

Finding it hopeless to try to close, the *Essex*

[1] This and most of the anecdotes are taken from the invaluable *Life of Farragut*, pp. 37–46.

stood for the land, Porter intending to run her ashore and burn her. But when she had drifted close to the bluffs the wind suddenly shifted, took her flat aback and paid her head off shore, exposing her to a raking fire. At this moment Lieutenant Downes, commanding the *Junior*, pulled out in a boat, through all the fire, to see if he could do anything. Three of the men with him, including an old boatswain's mate, named Kingsbury, had come out expressly "to share the fate of their old ship"; so they remained aboard, and, in their places, Lieutenant Downes took some of the wounded ashore, while the *Cherub* kept up a tremendous fire upon him. The shift of the wind gave Porter a faint hope of closing; and once more the riddled hulk of the little American frigate was headed for her foes. But Hilyar put his helm up to avoid close quarters; the battle was his already, and the cool old captain was too good an officer to leave anything to chance. Seeing he could not close, Porter had a hawser bent on the sheet anchor and let go. This brought the ship's head around, keeping her stationary and from such of her guns as were not dismounted and had men enough left to man them, a broadside was fired at the *Phœbe*. The wind was now very light, and the *Phœbe*, whose main- and mizzen-masts and mainyard were rather seriously wounded, and who had suffered a great loss of

canvas and cordage aloft, besides receiving a number of shot between wind and water,[1] and was thus a good deal crippled, began to drift slowly to leeward. It was hoped that she would drift out of gunshot, but this last chance was lost by the parting of the hawser, which left the *Essex* at the mercy of the British vessels. Their fire was deliberate and destructive, and could only be occasionally replied to by a shot from one of the long 12's of the *Essex*. The ship caught fire, and the flames came bursting up the hatchway, and a quantity of powder exploded below. Many of the crew were knocked overboard by shot, and drowned; others leaped into the water, thinking the ship was about to blow up, and tried to swim to the land. Some succeeded; among them was one man who had sixteen or eighteen pieces of iron in his leg, scales from the muzzle of his gun. The frigate had been shattered to pieces above the water-line, although from the smoothness of the sea she was not harmed enough below it to reduce her to a sinking condition.[2] The carpenter reported that he alone of his crew was fit for duty;

[1] Captain Hilyar's letter. James says the *Phœbe* had seven shot between wind and water, and one below the water-line. Porter says she had eighteen 12-pound shot below the water-line. The latter statement must have been an exaggeration; and James is probably further wrong still.

[2] An exactly analogous case to that of the British sloop *Reindeer*.

the others were dead or disabled. Lieutenant Wilmer was knocked overboard by a splinter, and drowned; his little negro boy, "Ruff," came up on deck, and, hearing of the disaster, deliberately leaped into the sea and shared his master's fate. Lieutenant Odenheimer was also knocked overboard, but afterward regained the ship. A shot, glancing upward, killed four of the men who were standing by a gun, striking the last one in the head and scattering his brains over his comrades. The only commissioned officer left on duty was Lieutenant Decatur McKnight. The sailing-master, Barnwell, when terribly wounded, remained at his post till he fainted from loss of blood. Of the 255 men aboard the *Essex* when the battle began, 58 had been killed, 66 wounded, and 31 drowned ("missing"), while 24 had succeeded in reaching shore. But 76 men were left unwounded, and many of these had been bruised or otherwise injured. Porter himself was knocked down by the windage of a passing shot. While the young midshipman, Farragut, was on the ward-room ladder, going below for gun-primers, the captain of the gun directly opposite the hatchway was struck full in the face by an 18-pound shot, and tumbled back on him. They fell down the hatch together, Farragut being stunned for some minutes. Later, while standing by the man at the wheel, an old quartermaster named Francis Bland, a shot

coming over the foreyard took off the quartermaster's right leg, carrying away at the same time one of Farragut's coat tails. The old fellow was helped below, but he died for lack of a tourniquet, before he could be attended to.

Nothing remained to be done, and at 6.20 the *Essex* surrendered and was taken possession of. The *Phœbe* had lost four men killed, including her first lieutenant, William Ingram, and 7 wounded; the *Cherub*, 1 killed, and 3, including Captain Tucker, wounded. Total, 5 killed and 10 wounded.[1] The difference in loss was natural, as, owing to their having long guns and the choice of position, the British had been able to fire ten shot to the Americans' one.

The conduct of the two English captains in attacking Porter as soon as he was disabled, in neutral waters, while they had been very careful to abstain from breaking the neutrality while he was in good condition, does not look well; at the best it shows that Hilyar had only been withheld hitherto from the attack by timidity, and it looks all the worse when it is remembered that Hilyar

[1] James says that most of the loss was occasioned by the first three broadsides of the *Essex;* this is not surprising, as in all she hardly fired half a dozen, and the last were discharged when half of the guns had been disabled, and there were scarcely men enough to man the remainder. Most of the time her resistance was limited to firing such of her six long guns as would bear.

owed his ship's previous escape entirely to Porter's forbearance on a former occasion, when the British frigate was entirely at his mercy, and that the British captain had afterward expressly said that he would not break the neutrality. Still, the British in this war did not act very differently from the way we ourselves did on one or two occasions in the Civil War,—witness the capture of the *Florida*. And after the battle was once begun the sneers which most of our historians, as well as the participators in the fight, have showered upon the British captains, for not foregoing the advantages which their entire masts and better artillery gave them by coming to close quarters, are decidedly foolish. Hilyar's conduct during the battle, as well as his treatment of the prisoners afterward, was perfect, and as a minor matter it may be mentioned that his official letter is singularly just and fair-minded. Says Lord Howard Douglass[1]: "The action displayed all that can reflect honor on the science and admirable conduct of Captain Hilyar and his crew, which, without the assistance of the *Cherub*, would have ensured the same termination. Captain Porter's sneers at the respectful distance the *Phœbe* kept are in fact acknowledgments of the ability with which Captain Hilyar availed himself of the superiority of his arms; it was a brilliant affair." While endorsing

[1] *Naval Gunnery*, p. 149.

this criticism, it may be worth while to compare it with some of the author's comments upon the other actions, as that between Decatur and the *Macedonian*. To make the odds here as great against Carden as they were against Porter, it would be necessary to suppose that the *Macedonian* had lost her main-topmast, had but six long 18's to oppose to her antagonist's 24's, and that the latter was assisted by the corvette *Adams;* so that, as a matter of fact, Porter fought at fully double or treble the disadvantage Carden did, and, instead of surrendering when he had lost a third of his crew, fought till three fifths of his men were dead or wounded, and, moreover, inflicted greater loss and damage on his antagonists than Carden did. If, then, as Lord Douglass says, the defence of the *Macedonian* brilliantly upheld the character of the British navy for courage, how much more did that of the *Essex* show for the American navy; and if Hilyar's conduct was " brilliant," that of Decatur was more so.

This was an action in which it is difficult to tell exactly how to award praise. Captain Hilyar deserves it, for the coolness and skill with which he made his approaches and took his positions so as to destroy his adversary with least loss to himself; and also for the precision of his fire. The *Cherub's* behavior was more remarkable for ex-

treme caution than for anything else. As regards the mere fight, Porter certainly did everything a man could do to contend successfully with the overwhelming force opposed to him, and the few guns that were available were served with the utmost precision. As an exhibition of dogged courage it has never been surpassed since the time when the Dutch captain, Klaeson, after fighting two long days, blew up his disabled ship, devoting himself and all his crew to death, rather than surrender to the hereditary foes of his race, and was bitterly avenged afterward by the grim "sea-beggars" of Holland; the days when Drake singed the beard of the Catholic king, and the small English craft were the dread and scourge of the great floating castles of Spain. Any man reading Farragut's account is forcibly reminded of some of the deeds of "derring do" in that, the heroic age of the Teutonic navies. Captain Hilyar, in his letter, says: "The defence of the *Essex*, taking into consideration our superiority of force and the very discouraging circumstance of her having lost her main-topmast and being twice on fire, did honor to her brave defenders, and most fully evinced the courage of Captain Porter and those under his command. Her colors were not struck until the loss in killed and wounded was so awfully great and her shattered condition so seriously bad as to render all further resistance

unavailing." [1] He also bears very candid testimony to the defence of the *Essex* having been effective enough to at one time render the result doubtful, saying: "Our first attack . . . produced no visible effect. Our second . . . was not more successful; and having lost the use of our mainsail, jib, and mainstay, appearances looked a little inauspicious." Throughout the war no ship was so desperately defended as the *Essex*, taking into account the frightful odds

[1] James (p. 419) says: "The *Essex*, as far as is borne out by proof (the only safe way where an American is concerned), had 24 men killed and 45 wounded. But Captain Porter, thinking by exaggerating his loss to prop up his fame, talks of 58 killed and mortally wounded, 39 severely, 27 slightly," etc. This would be no more worthy of notice than any other of his falsifications, were it not followed by various British writers. Hilyar states that he has 161 prisoners, has found 23 dead, that three wounded were taken off, between 20 and 30 reached the shore, and that the "remainder are either killed or wounded." It is by wilfully preserving silence about this last sentence that James makes out his case. It will be observed that Hilyar enumerates 161 + 23 + 3 + 25 (say) or 212, and says the remainder were either killed or wounded; Porter having 255 men at first, this remainder was 43. Hilyar stating that of his 161 prisoners, 42 were wounded, his account thus gives the Americans 111 killed and wounded. James's silence about Hilyar's last sentence enables him to make the loss but 69, and his wilful omission is quite on a par with the other meannesses and falsehoods which utterly destroy the reliability of his work. By Hilyar's own letter, it is thus seen that Porter's loss in killed and wounded was certainly 111, perhaps 116, or if Porter had, as James says, 265 men, 126. There still remain

against which she fought, which always enhances the merit of a defence. The *Lawrence*, which suffered even more, was backed by a fleet; the *Frolic* was overcome by an equal foe; and the *Reindeer* fought at far less of a disadvantage, and suffered less. None of the frigates, British or American, were defended with anything like the resolution she displayed.

But it is perhaps permissible to inquire whether

some discrepancies between the official accounts, which can be compared in tabular form:

	Hilyar		Porter
Prisoners unwounded	119	Prisoners unwounded	75
" wounded	42	" slightly wounded	27
Taken away wounded	3	" severely wounded	39
Those who reached shore	25	Killed	58
Remainder killed or wounded.	43	Missing	31
Killed	23	Reached shore	25
	255		255

The explanation probably is that Hilyar's "wounded" do not include Porter's "27 slightly wounded," and that his "161 prisoners" include Porter's "25 who reached shore," and his "25 who reached shore" comes under Porter's "31 missing." This would make the accounts nearly tally. At any rate, in Porter's book are to be found the names of all his killed, wounded, and missing; and their relatives received pensions from the American government, which, if the returns were false, would certainly have been a most elaborate piece of deception. It is far more likely that Hilyar was mistaken; or he may have counted in the *Essex Junior's* crew, which would entirely account for the discrepancies. In any event, it must be remembered that he makes the American killed and wounded 111 (Porter, 124), and *not* 69, as James says. The latter's statement is wilfully false, as he had seen Hilyar's letter.

Porter's course, after the accident to his topmast occurred, was altogether the best that could have been taken. On such a question no opinion could have been better than Farragut's, although, of course, his judgment was *ex post facto*, as he was very young at the time of the fight.

"In the first place, I consider our original and greatest error was in attempting to regain the anchorage; being greatly superior in sailing powers, we should have borne up and run before the wind. If we had come in contact with the *Phœbe* we should have carried her by boarding; if she avoided us, as she might have done by her greater ability to manœuvre, then we should have taken her fire and passed on, leaving both vessels behind until we had replaced our topmast, by which time they would have been separated, as unless they did so it would have been no chase, the *Cherub* being a dull sailer.

"Secondly, when it was apparent to everybody that we had no chance of success under the circumstances, the ship should have been run ashore, throwing her broadside to the beach to prevent raking, and fought as long as was consistent with humanity, and then set on fire. But, having determined upon anchoring, we should have bent a spring on to the ring of the anchor, instead of to the cable, where it was exposed, and could be shot away as fast as put on."

But it must be remembered that when Porter decided to anchor near shore, in neutral water, he could not anticipate Hilyar's deliberate and treacherous breach of faith. I do not allude to the mere disregard of neutrality. Whatever international moralists may say, such disregard is a mere question of expediency. If the benefits to be gained by attacking a hostile ship in neutral waters are such as to counterbalance the risk of incurring the enmity of the neutral power, why then the attack ought to be made. Had Hilyar, when he first made his appearance off Valparaiso, sailed in with his two ships, the men at quarters and guns out, and at once attacked Porter, considering the destruction of the *Essex* as outweighing the insult to Chili, why, his behavior would have been perfectly justifiable. In fact, this is unquestionably what he intended to do; but he suddenly found himself in such a position that, in the event of hostilities, *his* ship would be the captured one, and he owed his escape purely to Porter's over-forbearance, under great provocation. Then he gave his word to Porter that he would not infringe on the neutrality; and he never dared to break it, until he saw Porter was disabled and almost helpless! This may seem strong language to use about a British officer, but it is justly strong. Exactly as any outsider must consider Warrington's attack on the British brig *Nautilus*

in 1815 as a piece of needless cruelty, so any outsider must consider Hilyar as having most treacherously broken faith with Porter.

After the fight Hilyar behaved most kindly and courteously to the prisoners; and, as already said, he fought his ship most ably, for it would have been quixotic to a degree to forego his advantages. But previous to the battle his conduct had been over-cautious. It was to be expected that the *Essex* would make her escape as soon as practicable, and so he should have used every effort to bring her to action. Instead of this, he always declined the fight when alone; and he owed his ultimate success to the fact that the *Essex*, instead of escaping, as she could several times have done, stayed, hoping to bring the *Phœbe* to action single-handed. It must be remembered that the *Essex* was almost as weak compared to the *Phœbe* as the *Cherub* was compared to the *Essex*. The latter was just about midway between the British ships, as may be seen by the following comparison. In the action the *Essex* fought all six of her long 12's, and the *Cherub* both her long 9's, instead of the corresponding broadside carronades which the ships regularly used. This gives the *Essex* a better armament than she would have had fighting her guns as they were regularly used; but it can be seen how great the inequality still was. It must also be kept in mind that, while in the battles

between the American 44's and British 38's, the short weight 24-pounders of the former had in reality no greater range or accuracy than the full weight 18's of their opponents, in this case the *Phœbe's* full weight 18's had a very much greater range and accuracy than the short weight 12's of the *Essex*.

COMPARATIVE FORCE

	Men	Broadside Guns	Weight	(Total)
Phœbe....	320	13 long 18's	234 lbs.	
		1 " 12	12 "	
		1 " 9	9 "	(255)
		7 short 32's	224 "	
		1 " 18	18 "	(242)
		23 guns,	497 lbs.	
Cherub....	180	2 long 9's	18 lbs.	(18)
		2 short 18's	36 "	
		9 " 32's	288 "	(324)
		13 guns,	342 lbs.	
	500 men,	36 guns,	839 lbs. metal.	
			{273 long. {566 short. }	
Essex.....	255	6 long 12's	66 lbs.	Taking 7 per cent. off for short weight.
		17 short 32's	504 "	
	255 men,	23 guns,	570 lbs.	

All accounts agree as to the armament of the *Essex*. I have taken that of the *Phœbe* and *Cherub*

from James; but Captain Porter's official letter and all the other American accounts make the *Phœbe's* broadside fifteen long 18's and eight short 32's, and give the *Cherub*, in all, eighteen short 32's, eight short 24's, and two long 9's. This would make their broadside 904 lbs., 288 long, 616 short. I would have no doubt that the American accounts were right if the question rested solely on James's veracity; but he probably took his figures from official sources. At any rate, remembering the difference between long guns and carronades, it appears that the *Essex* was really nearly intermediate in force between the *Phœbe* and the *Cherub*. The battle being fought, with a very trifling exception, at long range, it was in reality a conflict between a crippled ship throwing a broadside of 66 lbs. of metal, and two ships throwing 273 lbs., who, by their ability to manœuvre, could choose positions where they could act with full effect, while their antagonist could not return a shot. Contemporary history does not afford a single instance of so determined a defence against such frightful odds.

The official letters of Captains Hilyar and Porter agree substantially in all respects; the details of the fight, as seen in the *Essex*, are found in the *Life of Farragut*. But, although the British captain does full justice to his foe, British historians have universally tried to belittle Porter's

conduct. It is much to be regretted that we have no British account worth paying attention to of the proceedings before the fight, when the *Phœbe* declined single combat with the *Essex*. James, of course, states that the *Phœbe* did *not* decline it, but he gives no authority, and his unsupported assertion would be valueless even if uncontradicted. His account of the action is grossly inaccurate, as he has inexcusably garbled Hilyar's report. One instance of this I have already mentioned, as regards Hilyar's account of Porter's loss. Again, Hilyar distinctly states that the *Essex* was twice on fire, yet James (p. 418) utterly denies this, thereby impliedly accusing the British captain of falsehood. There is really no need of the corroboration of Porter's letter, but he has it most fully in the *Life of Farragut*, p. 37: "The men came rushing up from below, many with their clothes burning, which were torn from them as quickly as possible, and those for whom this could not be done were told to jump overboard and quench the flames. . . . One man swam to shore with scarcely a square inch of his body which had not been burned, and, although he was deranged for some days, he ultimately recovered, and afterward served with me in the West Indies." The third unfounded statement in James's account is that buckets of spirits were found in all parts of the main-deck of the *Essex*, and that most of

the prisoners were drunk. No authority is cited for this, and there is not a shadow of truth in it. He ends by stating that "few even in his own country will venture to speak well of Captain David Porter." After these various paragraphs we are certainly justified in rejecting James's account *in toto*. An occasional mistake is perfectly excusable, and gross ignorance of a good many facts does not invalidate a man's testimony with regard to some others with which he is acquainted; but a wilful and systematic perversion of the truth in a number of cases throws a very strong doubt on a historian's remaining statements, unless they are supported by unquestionable authority.

But if British historians have generally given Porter much less than his due, by omitting all reference to the inferiority of his guns, his lost topmast, etc., it is no worse than Americans have done in similar cases. The latter, for example, will make great allowances in the case of the *Essex* for her having carronades only, but utterly fail to allude to the *Cyane* and *Levant* as having suffered under the same disadvantage. They should remember that the rules cut both ways.

The *Essex* having suffered chiefly above the water-line, she was repaired sufficiently in Valparaiso to enable her to make the voyage to England, where she was added to the British navy. The *Essex Junior* was disarmed and the American

prisoners embarked in her for New York, on parole. But Lieutenant McKnight, Chaplain Adams, Midshipman Lyman, and eleven seamen were exchanged on the spot for some of the British prisoners on board the *Essex Junior*. McKnight and Lyman accompanied the *Phœbe* to Rio Janeiro, where they embarked on a Swedish vessel, were taken out of her by the *Wasp*, Captain Blakely, and were lost with the rest of the crew of that vessel. The others reached New York in safety. Of the prizes made by the *Essex*, some were burnt or sunk by the Americans, and some retaken by the British. And so, after nearly two years' uninterrupted success, the career of the *Essex* terminated amid disasters of all kinds. But at least her officers and crew could reflect that they had afforded an example of courage in adversity that it would be difficult to match elsewhere.

The first of the new heavy sloops of war that got to sea was the *Frolic*, Master-Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, which put out early in February. Shortly afterward, she encountered a large Carthagenian privateer, which refused to surrender and was sunk by a broadside, nearly a hundred of her crew being drowned. Before daylight on the 20th of April, lat. 24° 12′ N., long. 81° 25′ W., she fell in with the British 36-gun frigate *Orpheus*, Captain Pigot, and the 12-gun

schooner *Shelburne*, Lieutenant Hope, both to leeward. The schooner soon weathered the *Frolic*, but of course was afraid to close, and the American sloop continued beating to windward, in the effort to escape, for nearly thirteen hours; the water was started, the anchors cut away, and finally the guns thrown overboard—a measure by means of which the *Hornet*, the *Rattlesnake*, and the *Adams* succeeded in escaping under similar circumstances,—but all was of no avail, and she was finally captured. The Court of Inquiry honorably acquitted both officers and crew. As was to be expected, James considers the surrender a disgraceful one, because the guns were thrown overboard. As I have said, this was a measure which had proved successful in several cases of a like nature; the criticism is a piece of petty meanness. Fortunately, we have Admiral Codrington's dictum on the surrender (*Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 310), which he evidently considered as perfectly honorable.

A sister ship to the *Frolic*, the *Peacock*, Captain Lewis Warrington, sailed from New York on March 12th, and cruised southward; on the 28th of April, at seven in the morning, lat. 17° 47′ N., long. 80° 7′ W., several sail were made to the windward.[1] These were a small convoy of merchantmen, bound for the Bermudas, under the protection of the 18-gun brig-sloop *Epervier*, Captain

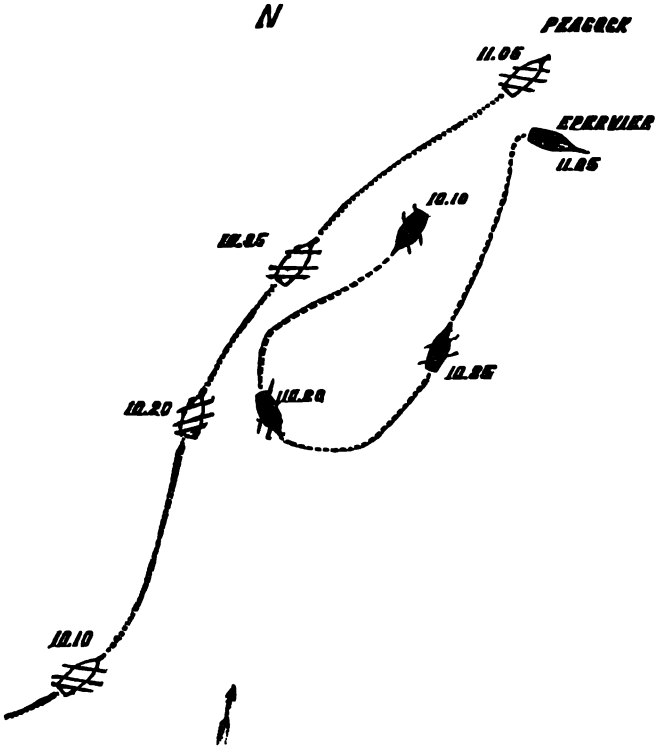
[1] Official letter of Captain Warrington, April 29, 1814.

Wales, 5 days out of Havana, and with $118,000 in specie on board.[1] The *Epervier*, when discovered, was steering north by east, the wind being from the eastward; soon afterward, the wind veered gradually round to the southward, and the *Epervier* hauled up close on the port tack, while the convoy made all sail away, and the *Peacock* came down with the wind on her starboard quarter. At 10 A.M., the vessels were within gunshot, and the *Peacock* edged away to get in a raking broadside, but the *Epervier* frustrated this by putting her helm up until close on her adversary's bow, when she rounded to and fired her starboard guns, receiving in return the starboard broadside of the *Peacock* at 10.20 A.M. These first broadsides took effect aloft, the brig being partially dismantled, while the *Peacock's* foreyard was totally disabled by two round shot in the starboard quarter, which deprived the ship of the use of her foresail and fore-topsail, and compelled her to run large. However, the *Epervier* eased away[2] when abaft her foe's beam, and ran off alongside of her (using her port guns, while the American still had the starboard battery engaged) at 10.35. The *Peacock's* fire was now very hot, and directed chiefly at her adversary's hull, on which it told heavily, while she did not suffer at

[1] James, vi., 424.

[2] According to some accounts, she at this time tacked.

all in return. The *Epervier* coming up into the wind, owing somewhat to the loss of head-sail, Captain Wales called his crew aft to try boarding,



but they refused, saying "she 's too heavy for us," [1] and then, at 11.05 the colors were hauled down.

[1] James, *Naval Occurrences*, p. 243.

Except the injury to her foreyard, the *Peacock's* damages were confined to the loss of a few topmast and topgallant backstays, and some shot-holes through her sails. Of her crew, consisting, all told, of 166 men and boys,[1] only two were wounded, both slightly. The *Epervier*, on the other hand, had 45 shot-holes in her hull, 5 feet of water in her hold, main-topmasts over the side, mainmast nearly in two, main-boom shot away, bowsprit wounded severely, and most of the fore-rigging and stays shot away; and of her crew of 128 men (according to the list of prisoners given by Captain Warrington; James says 118, but he is not backed up by any official report), 9 were killed and mortally wounded and 14 severely and slightly wounded. Instead of two long 6's for bow-chasers and a shifting carronade, she had two 18-pound carronades (according to the American prize-lists [2]; Captain Warrington says 32's). Otherwise she was armed as usual. She was, like the rest of her kind, very "tubby," being as broad as the *Peacock*, though ten feet shorter on deck. Allowing, as usual, seven per cent. for short weight of the American shot, we get the

[1] Niles's *Register*, vi., 196, says only 160; the above is taken from Warrington's letter of June 1st, preserved with the other manuscript letters in the Naval Archives. The crew contained about ten boys, was not composed of picked men, and did not number 185—*vide* James.

[2] *American State Papers*, xiv., p. 427.

COMPARATIVE FORCE

	Tons	No. Broadside Guns	Weight Metal	Crew	Loss
Peacock.....	509	11	315	166	2
Epervier.....	477	9	274	128	23

That is, the relative force being as 12 is to 10, the relative execution done was as 12 is to 1, and the *Epervier* surrendered before she had lost a fifth of her crew. The case of the *Epervier* closely resembles that of the *Argus*. In both cases the officers behaved finely; in both cases, too, the victorious foe was heavier, in about the same proportion, while neither the crew of the *Argus*, nor the crew of the *Epervier* fought with the determined bravery displayed by the combatants in almost every other struggle of the war. But it must be added that the *Epervier* did worse than the *Argus*, and the *Peacock* (American) better than the *Pelican*. The gunnery of the *Epervier* was extraordinarily poor; "the most disgraceful part of the affair was that our ship was cut to pieces and the enemy hardly scratched." [1] James states that after the first two or three broadsides several carronades became unshipped, and that the others were dismounted by the fire of the *Peacock;* that the men had not been exercised at the guns; and, most important of all, that the crew (which contained several "foreigners," but was chiefly

[1] *Memoirs of Admiral Codrington*, i., 322.

British; as the *Argus's* was chiefly American) was disgracefully bad. The *Peacock*, on the contrary, showed skilful seamanship as well as excellent gunnery. In 45 minutes after the fight was over the foreyard had been sent down and fished, the foresail set up, and everything in complete order again [1]; the prize was got in sailing order by dark, though great exertions had to be made to prevent her sinking. Mr. Nicholson, first of the *Peacock*, was put in charge as prize-master. The next day the two vessels were abreast of Amelia Island when two frigates were discovered in the north, to leeward. Captain Warrington at once directed the prize to proceed to St. Mary's, while he separated and made sail on a wind to the south, intending to draw the frigates after him, as he was confident that the *Peacock*, a very fast vessel, could outsail them.[2] The plan succeeded perfectly, the brig reaching Savannah on the first of May, and the ship three days afterward. The *Epervier* was purchased for the U. S. Navy, under the same name and rate. The *Peacock* sailed again on June 4th,[3] going first northward to the Grand Banks, then to the Azores: then she stationed herself in the mouth of the Irish Channel, and afterward cruised off Cork, the mouth of the

[1] Letter of Captain Warrington, April 29, 1814.
[2] Letter of Captain Warrington, May 4, 1814.
[3] Letter of Captain Warrington, October 30, 1814.

Shannon, and the North of Ireland, capturing several very valuable prizes and creating great consternation. She then changed her station, to elude the numerous vessels that had been sent after her, and sailed southward, off Cape Ortegal, Cape Finisterre, and finally among the Barbadoes reaching New York, October 29th. During this cruise she encountered no war vessel smaller than a frigate; but captured 14 sail of merchantmen, some containing valuable cargoes, and manned by 148 men.

On April 29th, H.M.S. schooner *Ballahou*, 6, Lieutenant King, while cruising off the American coast was captured by the *Perry*, privateer, a much heavier vessel, after an action of ten minutes' duration.

The general peace prevailing in Europe allowed the British to turn their energies altogether to America; and in no place was this increased vigor so much felt as in Chesapeake Bay, where a great number of line-of-battle ships, frigates, sloops, and transports had assembled, in preparation for the assault on Washington and Baltimore. The defence of these waters was confided to Captain Joshua Barney,[1] with a flotilla of gunboats.

[1] He was born at Baltimore, July 6, 1759; James, with habitual inaccuracy, calls him an Irishman. He makes Decatur, by the way, commit the geographical solecism of being born in "Maryland, Virginia."

These consisted of three or four sloops and schooners, but mainly of barges, which were often smaller than the ship's boats that were sent against them. These gunboats were manned by from 20 to 40 men each, and each carried, according to its size, one or two long 24-, 18-, or 12-pounders. They were bad craft at best; and, in addition, it is difficult to believe that they were handled to the fullest advantage.

On June 1st, Commodore Barney, with the block sloop *Scorpion* and 14 smaller "gunboats," chiefly row gallies, passed the mouth of the Patuxent, and chased the British schooner *St. Lawrence* and seven boats, under Captain Barrie, until they took refuge with the *Dragon*, 74, which in turn chased Barney's flotilla into the Patuxent, where she blockaded it in company with the *Albion*, 74. They were afterward joined by the *Loire*, 38, *Narcissus*, 32, and *Jasseur*, 18, and Commodore Barney moved two miles up St. Leonard's Creek, while the frigates and sloop blockaded its mouth. A deadlock now ensued; the gunboats were afraid to attack the ships, and the ships' boats were just as afraid of the gunboats. On the 8th, 9th, and 11th, skirmishes occurred; on each occasion the British boats came up till they caught sight of Barney's flotilla, and were promptly chased off by the latter, which, however, took good care not to meddle with the

larger vessels. Finally, Colonel Wadsworth, of the artillery, with two long 18-pounders, assisted by the marines, under Captain Miller, and a few regulars, offered to co-operate from the shore while Barney assailed the two frigates with the flotilla. On the 26th, the joint attack took place most successfully ; the *Loire* and *Narcissus* were driven off, although not much damaged, and the flotilla rowed out in triumph, with a loss of but 4 killed and 7 wounded. But in spite of this small success, which was mainly due to Colonel Wadsworth, Commodore Barney made no more attempts with his gunboats. The bravery and skill which the flotilla men showed at Bladensburg prove conclusively that their ill success on the water was due to the craft they were in, and not to any failing of the men. At the same period the French gunboats were even more unsuccessful, but the Danes certainly did very well with theirs.

Barney's flotilla in the Patuxent remained quiet until August 22d, and then was burned when the British advanced on Washington. The history of this advance, as well as of the unsuccessful one on Baltimore, concerns less the American than the British navy, and will be but briefly alluded to here. On August 20th, Major-General Ross and Rear-Admiral Cockburn, with about 5000 soldiers and marines, moved on Washington by

land; while a squadron composed of the *Seahorse*, 38, *Euryalus*, 36, bombs *Devastation*, *Ætna*, and *Meteor*, and rocket-ship *Erebus*, under Captain James Alexander Gordon, moved up the Potomac to attack Fort Washington, near Alexandria; and Sir Peter Parker, in the *Menelaus*, 38, was sent "to create a diversion" above Baltimore. Sir Peter's "diversion" turned out most unfortunately for him: for, having landed to attack 120 Maryland militia, under Colonel Reade, he lost his own life, while fifty of his followers were placed *hors de combat* and the remainder chased back to the ship by the victors, who had but three wounded.

The American army, which was to oppose Ross and Cockburn, consisted of some seven thousand militia, who fled so quickly that only about 1500 British had time to become engaged. The fight was really between these 1500 British regulars and the American flotilla men. These consisted of 78 marines, under Captain Miller, and 370 sailors, some of whom served under Captain Barney, who had a battery of two 18's and three 12's, while the others were armed with muskets and pikes and acted with the marines. Both sailors and marines did nobly, inflicting most of the loss the British suffered, which amounted to 256 men, and in return lost over a hundred of their own men, including the two captains, who were

wounded and captured, with the guns.[1] Ross took Washington and burned the public buildings; and the panic-struck Americans foolishly burned the *Columbia*, 44, and *Argus*, 18, which were nearly ready for service.

Captain Gordon's attack on Fort Washington was conducted with great skill and success. Fort Washington was abandoned as soon as fired upon, and the city of Alexandria surrendered upon most humiliating conditions. Captain Gordon was now joined by the *Fairy*, 18, Captain Baker, who brought him orders from Vice-Admiral Cochrane to return; and the squadron began to work down the river, which was very difficult to navigate. Commodore Rodgers, with some of the crew of the two 44's, *Guerrière* and *Java*, tried to bar their progress, but had not sufficient means. On September 1st, an attempt was made to destroy the *Devastation* by fire-ships, but it failed; on the 4th the attempt was repeated by Commodore Rodgers, with a party of some forty men, but they were driven off and attacked by the British boats, under Captain Baker, who in turn was repulsed with the loss of his second lieutenant killed and some twenty-five men killed or wounded. The squadron also had to pass and silence a bat-

[1] The optimistic Cooper thinks that two regular regiments would have given the Americans this battle—which is open to doubt.

tery of light field-pieces on the 5th, where they suffered enough to raise their total loss to seven killed and thirty-five wounded. Gordon's inland expedition was thus concluded most successfully, at a very trivial cost; it was a most venturesome feat, reflecting great honor on the captains and crews engaged in it.

Baltimore was threatened actively by sea and land early in September. On the 13th, an indecisive conflict took place between the British regulars and American militia, in which the former came off with the honor, and the latter with the profit. The regulars held the field, losing 350 men, including General Ross; the militia retreated in fair order with a loss of but 200. The water attack was also unsuccessful. At 5 A.M. on the 13th, the bomb vessels *Meteor*, *Ætna*, *Terror*, *Volcano*, and *Devastation*, the rocket-ship *Erebus*, and the frigates *Severn*, *Euryalus*, *Havannah*, and *Hebrus* opened on Fort McHenry, some of the other fortifications being occasionally fired at. A furious but harmless cannonade was kept up between the forts and ships until 7 A.M. on the 14th, when the British fleet and army retired.

I have related these events out of their natural order because they really had very little to do with our navy, and yet it is necessary to mention them in order to give an idea of the course of events. The British and American accounts of

the various gun-boat attacks differ widely; but it is very certain that the gunboats accomplished little or nothing of importance. On the other hand, their loss amounted to nothing, for many of those that were sunk were afterward raised, and the total tonnage of those destroyed would not much exceed that of the British barges captured by them from time to time or destroyed by the land batteries.

The purchased brig *Rattlesnake*, 16, had been cruising in the Atlantic with a good deal of success; but in lat. 40° N., long. 33° W., was chased by a frigate from which Lieutenant Renshaw, the brig's commander, managed to escape only by throwing overboard all his guns except two long nines; and on June 22d he was captured by the *Leander*, 50, Captain Sir George Ralph Collier, K. C. B.

The third of the new sloops to get to sea was the *Wasp*, 22, Captain Johnston Blakely, which left Portsmouth on May 1st, with a very fine crew of 173 men, almost exclusively New Englanders; there was said not to have been a single foreign seaman on board. It is, at all events, certain that during the whole war no vessel was ever better manned and commanded than this daring and resolute cruiser. The *Wasp* slipped unperceived through the blockading frigates, and ran

into the mouth of the English Channel, right in the thick of the English cruisers; here she remained several weeks, burning and scuttling many ships. Finally, on June 28th, at 4 A.M., in lat. 48° 36′ N., long. 11° 15′ W.,[1] while in the chase of two merchantmen, a sail was made on the weather beam. This was the British brig-sloop *Reindeer*, 18, Captain William Manners,[2] with a crew of 118, as brave men as ever sailed or fought on the narrow seas. Like the *Peacock* (British) the *Reindeer* was only armed with 24-pounders, and Captain Manners must have known well that he was to do battle with a foe heavier than himself; but there was no more gallant seaman in the whole British navy, fertile as it was in men who cared but little for odds of size or strength. As the day broke, the *Reindeer* made sail for the *Wasp*, then lying in the west-southwest.

The sky was overcast with clouds, and the smoothness of the sea was hardly disturbed by the light breeze that blew out of the northeast. Captain Blakely hauled up and stood for his antagonist, as the latter came slowly down with the wind nearly aft, and so light was the weather that the vessels kept almost on even keels. It was not till quarter past one that the *Wasp's* drum rolled out its loud challenge as it beat to

[1] Letter of Captain Blakely, July 8, 1814.
[2] James, vi., 429.

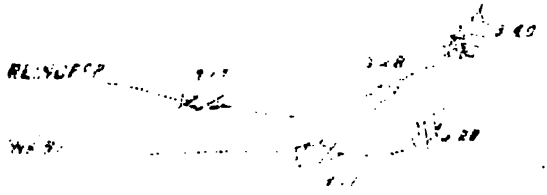
quarters, and a few minutes afterward the ship put about and stood for the foe, thinking to weather him; but at 1.50 the brig also tacked and stood away, each of the cool and skilful captains being bent on keeping the weather-gage. At half-past two, the *Reindeer* again tacked, and, taking in her staysails, stood for the *Wasp*, who furled her royals; and, seeing that she would be weathered, at 2.50 put about in her turn and ran off, with the wind a little forward the port beam, brailing up the mizzen, while the *Reindeer* hoisted her flying-jib, to close, and gradually came up on the *Wasp's* weather quarter. At 17 minutes past three, when the vessels were not sixty yards apart, the British opened the conflict, firing the shifting 12-pound carronade, loaded with round and grape. To this the Americans could make no return, and it was again loaded and fired, with the utmost deliberation; this was repeated five times, and would have been a trying ordeal to a crew less perfectly disciplined than the *Wasp's*. At 3.26, Captain Blakely, finding his enemy did not get on his beam, put his helm a-lee and luffed up, firing his guns from aft forward as they bore. For ten minutes the ship and the brig lay abreast, not twenty yards apart, while the cannonade was terribly destructive. The concussion of the explosions almost deadened what little way the vessels had on, and the smoke hung over them like

a pall. The men worked at the guns with desperate energy, but the odds in weight of metal (3 to 2) were too great against the *Reindeer*, where both sides played their parts so manfully. Captain Manners stood at his post, as resolute as ever, though wounded again and again. A grape-shot passed through both his thighs, bringing him to the deck; but, maimed and bleeding to death, he sprang to his feet, cheering on the sea-men. The vessels were now almost touching, and, putting his helm a weather, he ran the *Wasp* aboard on her port [1] quarter, while the boarders gathered forward, to try it with the steel. But the Carolina captain had prepared for this with cool confidence; the marines came aft; close under the bulwarks crouched the boarders, grasping in their hands the naked cutlasses, while behind them were drawn up the pikemen. As the vessels came grinding together the men hacked and thrust at one another through the open port-holes, while the black smoke curled up from between the hulls. Then through the smoke appeared the grim faces of the British sea-dogs, and the fighting was bloody enough; for the stubborn English stood well in the hard hand-play. But those who escaped the deadly fire of the topmen,

[1] Letter of Captain Blakely, July 8, 1814. Cooper says starboard; it is a point of little importance; all accounts agree as to the *relative* positions of the craft.

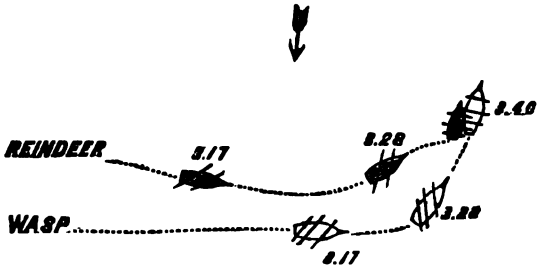
escaped only to be riddled through by the long Yankee pikes; so, avenged by their own hands, the foremost of the assailants died, and the others gave back. The attack was foiled, though the *Reindeer's* marines kept answering well the American fire. Then the English captain, already mortally wounded, but with the indomitable courage that nothing but death could conquer, cheering and rallying his men, himself sprang, sword in hand, into the rigging, to lead them on; and they followed him with a will. At that instant a ball from the *Wasp's* maintop crashed through his skull, and, still clenching in his right hand the sword he had shown he could wear so worthily, with his face to the foe, he fell back on his own deck dead, while above him yet floated the flag for which he had given his life. No Norse Viking, slain over shield, ever died better. As the British leader fell and his men recoiled, Captain Blakely passed the word to board; with wild hurrahs the boarders swarmed over the hammock nettings, there was a moment's furious struggle, the surviving British were slain or driven below, and the captain's clerk, the *highest officer left*, surrendered the brig at 3.44, just 27 minutes after the *Reindeer* had fired the first gun, and just 18 after the *Wasp* had responded.

Both ships had suffered severely in the short struggle; but, as with the *Shannon* and *Chesa-*



Capture of the Chesapeake by the Shannon.

peake, the injuries were much less severe aloft than in the hulls. All the spars were in their places. The *Wasp's* hull had received 6 round, and many grape; a 24-pound shot had passed through the foremast; and of her crew of 173,



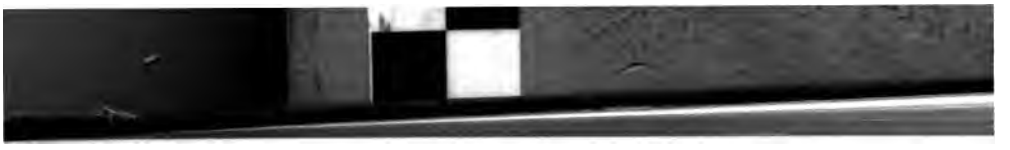
11 were killed or mortally wounded, and 15 wounded severely or slightly. The *Reindeer* was completely cut to pieces in a line with her ports; her upper works, boats, and spare spars being one entire wreck. Of her crew of 118 men, 33 were killed outright or died later, and 34 were wounded, nearly all severely.

COMPARATIVE FORCE

	Tons	Broadside Guns	Weight Metal	No. Men	Loss
Wasp.....	509	11	315	173	26
Reindeer.....	477	10	210	118	67

It is thus seen that the *Reindeer* fought at a greater disadvantage than any other of the various British sloops that were captured in single

Capture of the Reindeer by the Wasp.



action during the war; and yet she made a better fight than any of them (though the *Frolic*, and the *Frolic* only, was defended with the same desperate courage)—a pretty sure proof that heavy metal is not the only factor to be considered in accounting for the American victories. "It is difficult to say which vessel behaved the best in this short but gallant combat." [1] I doubt if the war produced two better single-ship commanders than Captain Blakely and Captain Manners; and an equal meed of praise attaches to both crews. The British could rightly say that they yielded purely to heavy odds in men and metal; and the Americans, that the difference in execution was fully proportioned to the difference in force. It is difficult to know which to admire most, the wary skill with which each captain manœuvred before the fight, the perfect training and discipline that their crews showed, the decision and promptitude with which Captain Manners tried to retrieve the day by boarding, and the desperate bravery with which the attempt was made; or the readiness with which Captain Blakely made his preparations, and the cool courage with which the assault was foiled. All people of the English stock, no matter on which side of the Atlantic they live, if they have any pride in the many feats of fierce prowess done by the men of their blood and race,

[1] Cooper, ii., 287.

should never forget this fight; although we cannot but feel grieved to find that such men—men of one race and one speech; brothers in blood as well as in bravery—should ever have had to turn their weapons against one another.

The day after the conflict the prize's foremast went by the board, and, as she was much damaged by shot, Captain Blakely burned her, put a portion of his wounded prisoners on board a neutral, and with the remainder proceeded to France, reaching l'Orient on the 8th day of July.

On July 4th, Sailing-master Percival and 30 volunteers of the New York flotilla[1] concealed themselves on board a fishing-smack, and carried by surprise the *Eagle* tender, which contained a 32-pound howitzer and 14 men, 4 of whom were wounded.

On July 12th, while off the west coast of South Africa, the American brig *Syren* was captured after a chase of 11 hours by the *Medway*, 74, Captain Brine. The chase was to windward during the whole time, and made every effort to escape, throwing overboard all her boats, anchors, cables, and spare spars.[2] Her commander, Captain Parker, had died, and she was in charge of Lieut. N. J. Nicholson. By a curious coincidence,

[1] Letter of Commodore J. Lewis, July 6, 1814.

[2] Letter of Captain Brine to Vice-Admiral Tyler, July 12, 1814.

on the same day, July 12th, H. M. cutter *Landrail*, 4,[1] of 20 men, Lieut. Lancaster, was captured by the American privateer *Syren*, a schooner mounting 1 long heavy gun, with a crew of 70 men; the *Landrail* had 7, and the *Syren* 3 men wounded.

On July 14th, Gunboat No. 88, Sailing-master George Clement, captured, after a short skirmish, the tender of the *Tenedos* frigate, with her second lieutenant, 2 midshipmen, and 10 seaman.[2]

The *Wasp* stayed in l'Orient till she was thoroughly refitted, and had filled, in part, the gaps in her crew, from the American privateers in port. On August 27th, Captain Blakely sailed again, making two prizes during the next three days. On September 1st, she came up to a convoy of 10 sail under the protection of the *Armada*, 74, all bound for Gibraltar; the swift cruiser hovered round the merchantmen like a hawk, and though chased off again and again by the line-of-battle ship, always returned the instant the pursuit stopped, and finally actually succeeded in cutting off and capturing one ship, laden with iron and brass cannon, muskets, and other military stores of great value. At half-past six on the evening of the same day, in lat. 47° 30′ N., long. 11° W.,

[1] James, vi., 436; his statement is wrong as regards the privateer.

[2] Letter of Captain Isaac Hull, July 15, 1814.

while running almost free, four sail, two on the starboard bow, and two on the port, rather more to leeward, were made out.[1] Captain Blakely at once made sail for the most weatherly of the four ships in sight, though well aware that more than one of them might prove to be hostile cruisers, and they were all of unknown force. But the determined Carolinian was not one to be troubled by such considerations. He probably had several men less under his command than in the former action, but had profited by his experience with the *Reindeer* in one point, having taken aboard her 12-pounder boat carronade, of whose efficacy he had had very practical proof.

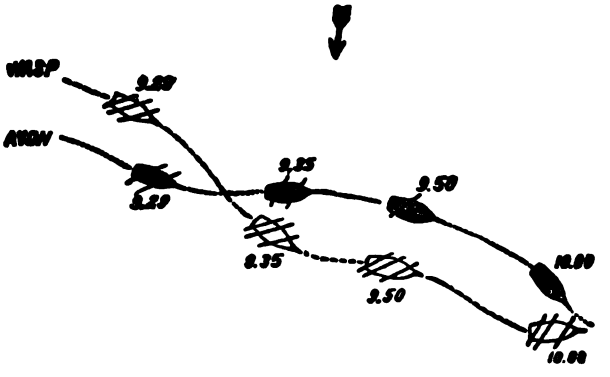
The chase, the British brig-sloop *Avon*, 18, Captain the Honorable James Arbuthnot,[2] was steering almost southwest; the wind, which was blowing fresh from the southeast, being a little abaft the port beam. At 7.00, the *Avon* began making night signals with the lanterns, but the *Wasp*, disregarding these, came steadily on; at 8.38 the *Avon* fired a shot from her stern-chaser,[3] and shortly afterward another from one of her lee or starboard guns. At twenty minutes past 9, the *Wasp* was on the port or weather quarter of the *Avon*, and the vessels interchanged several

[1] Official letter of Captain Blakely, September 8, 1814.
[2] James, vi., 432
[3] James, vi., 432.

hails; one of the American officers then came forward on the forecastle and ordered the brig to heave to, which the latter declined doing, and set her port fore-topmast studding-sail. The *Wasp* then, at 9.29, fired the 12-pound carronade into her, to which the *Avon* responded with her stern-chaser and the aftermost port guns. Captain Blakely then put his helm up, for fear his adversary would try to escape, and ran to leeward of her, and then ranged up alongside, having poured a broadside into her quarter. A close and furious engagement began, at such short range that the only one of the *Wasp's* crew who was wounded, was hit by a wad; four round shot struck her hull, killing two men, and she suffered a good deal in her rigging. The men on board did not know the name of their antagonist; but they could see through the smoke and the gloom of the night, as her black hull surged through the water, that she was a large brig; and aloft, against the sky, the sailors could be discerned, clustering in the tops.[1] In spite of the darkness the *Wasp's* fire was directed with deadly precision; the *Avon's* gaff was shot away at almost the first broadside, and most of her main-rigging and spars followed suit. She was hulled again and again, often below water-line; some of her carronades were dismounted, and, finally, the mainmast went by the

[1] Captain Blakely's letter.

board. At 10.00, after 31 minutes of combat, her fire had been completely silenced and Captain Blakely hailed to know if she had struck. No answer being received, and the brig firing a few random shot, the action recommenced; but, at 10.12, the *Avon* was again hailed, and this time answered that she had struck. While lowering away a boat to take possession, another sail



(H. B. M. brig-sloop *Castilian*, 18, Captain Braimer) was seen astern. The men were again called to quarters, and everything put in readiness as rapidly as possible; but, at 10.36, two more sail were seen (one of which was H. B. M. *Tartarus*, 20[1]). The braces being cut away, the *Wasp* was put before the wind until new ones could be rove. The *Castilian* pursued till she

[1] Niles's *Register*, vi., 216.

came up close, when she fired her lee guns into, or rather over, the weather quarter of the *Wasp*, cutting her rigging slightly. Repeated signals of distress having now been made by the *Avon* (which had lost 10 men killed and 32 wounded), the *Castilian* tacked and stood for her, and on closing found out she was sinking. Hardly had her crew been taken off when she went down.

Counting the *Wasp's* complement as full (though it was probably two or three short), taking James's statement of the crew of the *Avon* as true, including the boat carronades of both vessels, and considering the *Avon's* stern-chaser to have been a six-pounder, we get the

COMPARATIVE FORCE

	Tons	No. Guns	Weight Metal	No. Men	Loss
Wasp.....	509	12	327	160	3
Avon.....	477	11	280	117	42

It is self-evident that in the case of this action the odds, 14 to 11, are neither enough to account for the loss inflicted being as 14 to 1, nor for the rapidity with which, during a night encounter, the *Avon* was placed in a sinking condition. "The gallantry of the *Avon's* officers and crew cannot for a moment be questioned; but the gunnery of the latter appears to have been not one whit better than, to the discredit of the British navy, had fre-

quently before been displayed in combats of this kind. Nor, judging from the specimen given by the *Castilian*, is it likely that she would have performed any better." [1] On the other hand, "Captain Blakely's conduct on this occasion had all the merit shown in the previous action, with the additional claim of engaging an enemy under circumstances which led him to believe that her consorts were in the immediate vicinity. The steady, officer-like way in which the *Avon* was destroyed, and the coolness with which he prepared to engage the *Castilian* within ten minutes after his first antagonist had struck, are the best encomiums on this officer's character and spirit, as well as on the school in which he had been trained." [2]

The *Wasp* now cruised to the southward and westward, taking and scuttling one or two prizes. On September 21st, lat. 33° 12′ N., long. 14° 56′ W., she captured the brig *Atalanta*, 8, with 19 men, which proved a valuable prize, and was sent in with one of the midshipmen, Mr. Geisinger, aboard, as prize-master, who reached Savannah in safety on November 4th. Meanwhile, the *Wasp* kept on toward the southeast. On October 9th, in lat. 18° 35′ N., long. 30° 10′ W., she spoke and boarded the Swedish brig *Adonis*, and took out of her Lieutenant McKnight and Mr. Lyman, a

[1] James, vi., 435. [2] Cooper, ii., 291.

master's mate, both late of the *Essex*, on their way to England from Brazil.

This was the last that was ever heard of the gallant but ill-fated *Wasp*. How she perished, none ever knew; all that is certain is that she was never seen again. She was as good a ship, as well manned, and as ably commanded as any vessel in our little navy; and it may be doubted if there was at that time any foreign sloop of war of her size and strength that could have stood against her in a fair fight.

As I have said, the *Wasp* was manned almost exclusively by Americans. James says they were mostly Irish; the reason he gives for the assertion being that Captain Blakely spent the first sixteen months of his life in Dublin. This argument is quite on a par with another piece of logic which I cannot resist noticing. The point he wishes to prove is that Americans are cowards. Accordingly, on p. 475: "On her capstan the *Constitution* now mounted a piece resembling seven musket barrels, fixed together with iron bands. It was discharged by one lock, and each barrel threw twenty-five balls. . . . What could have impelled the Americans to invent such extraordinary implements of war but fear, downright fear?" Then a little farther on: "The men were provided with leather boarding-caps, fitted with bands of iron, . . . another strong symptom of fear!"

Now, such a piece of writing as this is simply evidence of an unsound mind; it is not so much malicious as idiotic. I only reproduce it to help prove what I have all along insisted on, that any of James's unsupported statements about the Americans, whether respecting the tonnage of the ships or the courage of the crews, are not worth the paper they are written on; on all points connected purely with the British navy, or which can be checked off by official documents or ships' logs, or where there would be no particular object in falsifying, James is an invaluable assistant, from the diligence and painstaking care he shows, and the thoroughness and minuteness with which he goes into details.

A fair-minded and interesting English critic,[1] whose remarks are generally very just, seems to me to have erred somewhat in commenting on this last sloop action. He says that the *Avon* was first crippled by dismantling shot from *long guns*. Now, the *Wasp* had but *one* long gun on the side engaged, and, moreover, began the action with the shortest and lightest of her carronades. Then he continues that the *Avon*, like the *Peacock*, "was hulled so low that the shot-holes could not be got at, and yielded to this fatal circumstance only." It certainly cannot be said, when

[1] Lord Howard Douglass, *Treatise on Naval Gunnery*, p. 416.

a brig has been dismasted, has had a third of her crew placed *hors de combat*, and has been rendered an unmanageable hulk, that she yields *only* because she has received a few shot below the water-line. These shot-holes undoubtedly hastened the result, but both the *Peacock* and the *Avon* would have surrendered even if they had remained absolutely water-tight.

The *Adams*, 28, had been cut down to a sloop of war at Washington, and then lengthened into a flush-decked, heavy corvette, mounting on each side 13 medium 18's, or columbiads, and 1 long 12, with a crew of 220 men, under the command of Captain Charles Morris, late first lieutenant of the *Constitution*.[1] She slipped out of the Potomac and past the blockaders on January 18th, and cruised eastward to the African coast and along it from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas, thence to the Canaries and Cape de Verde. She returned very nearly along the Equator, thence going toward the West Indies. The cruise was unlucky, but a few small prizes, laden with palm-oil and ivory, being made. In hazy weather, on March 25th, a large Indiaman (the *Woodbridge*) was captured; but while taking possession the weather cleared up, and Captain Morris found himself to

[1] *Autobiography of Commodore Morris*, Annapolis, 1880, p. 172.

leeward of 25 sail, two of which, a two-decker and a frigate, were making for him, and it took him till the next day to shake them off. He entered Savannah on May 1st and sailed again on the 8th, standing to the Gulf Stream, between Makanilla and Florida, to look out for the Jamaica fleet. He found this fleet on the 24th, but the discovery failed to do him much good, as the ships were under the convoy of a 74, two frigates, and three brigs. The *Adams* hovered on their skirts for a couple of days, but nothing could be done with them, for the merchantmen sailed in the closest possible order and the six war vessels exercised the greatest vigilance. So the corvette passed northward to the Newfoundland Banks, where she met with nothing but fogs and floating ice, and then turned her prow toward Ireland. On July 4th, she made out and chased two sail, who escaped into the mouth of the Shannon. After this the *Adams*, heartily tired of fogs and cold, stood to the southward and made a few prizes; then, in lat. 44° N., long. 10° W., on July 15th, she stumbled across the 18-pounder 36-gun frigate *Tigress*, Captain Henderson. The frigate was to leeward, and a hard chase ensued. It was only by dint of cutting away her anchors and throwing overboard some of her guns that the *Adams* held her own till sunset, when it fell calm. Captain Morris and his first lieutenant, Mr. Wadsworth,

had been the first and second lieutenants of *Old Ironsides* in Hull's famous cruise, and they proved that they had not forgotten their early experience, for they got out the boats to tow, and employed their time so well that by sunrise the frigate was two leagues astern. After eighteen hours' more chase the *Adams* dropped her. But in a day or two she ran across a couple more, one of which, an old bluff-bows, was soon thrown out; but the other was very fast, and kept close on the corvette's heels. As before, the frigate was to leeward. The *Adams* had been built by contract; one side was let to a sub-contractor of economical instincts, and accordingly turned out rather shorter than the other; the result was, the ship sailed a good deal faster on one tack than on the other. In this chase she finally got on her good tack in the night, and so escaped.[1] Captain Morris now turned homeward. During his two cruises he had made but ten prizes (manned by 161 men), none of very great value. His luck grew worse and worse. The continual cold and damp produced scurvy, and soon half of his crew were prostrated by the disease; and the weather kept on foggy as ever. Off the Maine coast a brig-sloop (the *Rifleman*, Captain Pearce) was

[1] This statement is somewhat traditional; I have also seen it made about the *John Adams*. But some old officers have told me positively that it occurred to the *Adams* on this cruise.

discovered and chased, but it escaped in the thick weather. The fog grew heavier, and early on the morning of August 17th the *Adams* struck land—literally struck it, too, for she grounded on the Isle of Haute, and had to throw over provisions, spare spars, etc., before she could be got off. Then she entered the Penobscot, and sailed twenty-seven miles up it to Hampden. The *Rifleman* meanwhile conveyed intelligence of her whereabouts to a British fleet, consisting of two line-of-battle ships, three frigates, three sloops, and ten troop transports, under the joint command of Rear-Admiral Griffith and Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke.[1]

This expedition accordingly went into the Penobscot and anchored off Castine. Captain Morris made every preparation he could to defend his ship, but his means were very limited; seventy of his men were dead or disabled by the scurvy; the remainder, many of them also diseased, were mustered out, to the number of 130 officers and seamen (without muskets) and 20 marines. He was joined, however, by 30 regulars, and later by over 300 militia armed with squirrel guns, ducking- and fowling-pieces, etc.,—in all between 500 and 550 men,[2] only 180 of whom, with 50 muskets among them, could be

[1] James, vi., 479.
[2] *Autobiography of Commodore Morris.*

depended upon. On September 3d, the British advanced by land and water, the land-force being under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel John, and consisting of 600 troops, 80 marines, and 80 seamen.[1] The flotilla was composed of barges, launches, and rocket-boats, under the command of Captain Barry of the *Dragon*, 74. In all, there were over 1500 men. The seamen of the *Adams*, from the wharf, opened fire on the flotilla, which returned it with rockets and carronades; but the advance was checked. Meanwhile, the British land-forces attacked the militia, who acted up to the traditional militia standard, and retreated with the utmost promptitude and celerity, omitting the empty formality of firing. This left Captain Morris surrounded by eight times his number, and there was nothing to do but set fire to the corvette and retreat. The seamen, marines, and regulars behaved well, and no attempt was made to molest them. None of Captain Morris's men were hit; his loss was confined to one sailor and one marine, who were too much weakened by scurvy to retreat with the others, who marched

[1] James, vi., 481. Whenever militia are concerned, James has not much fear of official documents and lets his imagination run riot; he here says the Americans had 1400 men, which is as accurate as he generally is in writing about this species of force. His aim being to overestimate the number of the Americans in the various engagements, he always supplies militia *ad libitum* to make up any possible deficiency.

to Portland, 200 miles off. The British lost ten men killed or wounded.

On September 9th, Gunboats Nos. 160 and 151, commanded by Mr. Thomas M. Pendleton, captured off Sapelo Bar, Ga., the British privateer *Fortune of War*, armed with two heavy pivot guns, and 35 men. She made a brief resistance, losing two of her men.[1]

On September 15th, the British 20-gun ship-sloops *Hermes* and *Carron*, and 18-gun brig-sloops *Sophie* and *Childers*, and a force of 200 men on shore,[2] attacked Fort Bowyer, on Mobile Point, but were repulsed without being able to do any damage whatever to the Americans. The *Hermes* was sunk and the assailants lost about 80 men.

On the 26th of September, while the privateer-schooner *General Armstrong*, of New York, Captain Samuel C. Reid, of one long 24, eight long 9's, and 90 men, was lying at anchor in the road of Fayal, a British squadron, composed of the *Plantagenet*, 74, Captain Robert Floyd, *Rota*, 38, Captain Philip Somerville, and *Carnation*, 18, Captain George Bentham, hove in sight.[3] One or more boats were sent in by the British, to

[1] Letter from Commodore H. G. Campbell, St. Mary's, September 12, 1814.

[2] James, vi., 527.

[3] Letter of Capt. S. C. Reid, October 7, 1814; and of John B. Dabney, Consul at Fayal, October 5, 1814.

reconnoitre the schooner, as they asserted, or, according to the American accounts, to carry her by a *coup de main*. At any rate, after repeatedly warning them off, the privateer fired into them, and they withdrew. Captain Reid then anchored, with springs on his cables, nearer shore, to await the expected attack, which was not long deferred. At 8 P. M. four boats from the *Plantagenet* and three from the *Rota*, containing in all 180 men,[1] under the command of Lieutenant William Matterface, first of the *Rota*, pulled in toward the road, while the *Carnation* accompanied them to attack the schooner if she got under way. The boats pulled in under cover of a small reef of rocks, where they lay for some time, and about midnight made the attack. The Americans opened with the pivot gun, and immediately afterward with their long 9's, while the boats replied with their carronades, and, pulling spiritedly on amidst a terrific fire of musketry from both sides, laid the schooner aboard on her bow and starboard quarter. The struggle was savage enough, the British hacking at the netting and trying to clamber up on deck, while the Americans fired their muskets and pistols in the faces of their assailants and thrust

[1] James, vi., 509. Both American accounts say 12 boats, with 400 men, and give the British loss at 250. According to my usual rule, I take each side's statement of its own force and loss.

the foremost through with their long pikes. The boats on the quarter were driven off; but on the forecastle all three of the American lieutenants were killed or disabled, and the men were giving back when Captain Reid led all the after-division up and drove the British back into their boats. This put an end to the assault. Two boats were sunk, most of the wounded being saved, as the shore was so near; two others were captured, and but three of the scattered flotilla returned to the ships. Of the Americans, two were killed, including the second lieutenant, Alexander O. Williams, and 7 were wounded, including the first and third lieutenants, Frederick A. Worth and Robert Johnson. Of the British, 34 were killed and 86 were wounded; among the former being the *Rota's* first and third lieutenants, William Matterface and Charles R. Norman, and among the latter her second lieutenant and first lieutenant of marines, Richard Rawle and Thomas Park. The schooner's long 24 had been knocked off its carriage by a carronade shot, but it was replaced and the deck cleared for another action. Next day the *Carnation* came in to destroy the privateer, but was driven off by the judicious use the latter made of her "Long Tom." But affairs being now hopeless, the *General Armstrong* was scuttled and burned, and the Americans retreated to the land. The British squadron was bound

for New Orleans, and on account of the delay and loss it had suffered, it was late in arriving, so that this action may be said to have helped in saving the Crescent City. Few regular commanders could have done as well as Captain Reid.

On October 6th, while Gunboat No. 160 was convoying some coasters from Savannah, it was carried by a British tender and nine boats.[1] The gun vessel was lying at anchor about eight leagues from St. Mary's, and the boats approached with muffled oars early in the morning. They were not discovered till nearly aboard, but the defence though short was spirited, the British losing about 20 men. Of the gunboat's 30 men but 16 were fit for action; those, under Sailing-master Thomas Paine, behaved well. Mr. Paine, especially, fought with the greatest gallantry; his thigh was broken with a grape-shot at the very beginning, but he hobbled up on his other leg to resist the boarders, fighting till he was thrust through by a pike and had received two sabre cuts. Any one of his wounds would have been enough to put an ordinary man *hors de combat.*

On October 11th, another desperate privateer battle took place. The brigantine *Prince de Neufchâtel*, Captain Ordronaux, of New York, was a superbly built vessel of 310 tons, mounting

[1] Letter from Commander H. G. Campbell, October 12, 1814.

17 guns, and originally possessing a crew of 150 men.[1] She had made a very successful cruise, having on board goods to the amount of $300,000, but had manned and sent in so many prizes that only 40 of her crew were left on board, while 37 prisoners were confined in the hold. One of her prizes was in company, but had drifted off to such a distance that she was unable to take part in the fight. At mid-day, on the 11th of October, while off Nantucket, the British frigate *Endymion*, 40, Captain Henry Hope, discovered the privateer and made sail in chase.[2] At 8.30 P.M., a calm having come on, the frigate despatched 5 boats, containing 111 men,[3] under the command of the first lieutenant, Abel Hawkins, to take the brigantine; while the latter triced up the boarding nettings, loaded the guns with grape and bullets, and prepared herself in every way for the coming encounter. She opened fire on the boats as they drew near, but they were soon alongside, and a most desperate engagement ensued. Some of the British actually cut through the nettings and reached the deck, but were killed by the

[1] *History of American Privateers*, by George Coggeshall, p. 241, New York, 1876. [2] James, vi., p. 527.

[3] According to Captain Ordronaux; James does not give the number, but says 28 were killed, 37 wounded, and the crew of the launch captured. Ten of the latter were unwounded, and 18 wounded. I do not know if he included these last among his "37 wounded."

privateersmen; and in a few minutes one boat was sunk, three others drifted off, and the launch, which was under the brigantine's stern, was taken possession of. The slaughter had been frightful, considering the number of the combatants. The victorious privateersmen had lost 7 killed, 15 badly and 9 slightly wounded, leaving but 9 untouched! Of the *Endymion's* men, James says 28, including the first lieutenant and a midshipman, were killed, and 37, including the second lieutenant and a master's mate, wounded; "besides which the launch was captured and the crew made prisoners." I do not know if this means 37 wounded, *besides* the wounded in the launch, or not[1]; of the prisoners captured 18 were wounded and 10 unhurt, so the loss was either 28 killed, 55 wounded, and 10 unhurt prisoners; or else 28 killed, 37 wounded, and 10 prisoners; but whether the total was 93 or 75 does not much matter. It was a most desperate conflict, and, remembering how short-handed the brigantine was, it reflected the highest honor on the American captain and his crew.

After their repulse before Baltimore, the British concentrated their forces for an attack upon New Orleans. Accordingly, a great fleet of line-

[1] I think James does not include the wounded in the launch, as he says 28 wounded were sent aboard the *Saturn;* this could hardly have included the men who had been captured.

of-battle ships, frigates, and smaller vessels, under Vice-Admiral Cochrane, convoying a still larger number of store-ships and transports containing the army of General Packenham, appeared off the Chandeleur Islands on December 8th. The American navy in these parts consisted of the ship *Louisiana* and schooner *Carolina* in the Mississippi River, and in the shallow bayous a few gunboats, of course without quarters, low in the water, and perfectly easy of entrance. There were also a few tenders and small boats. The British frigates and sloops anchored off the broad shallow inlet called Lake Borgne on the 12th; on this inlet there were 5 gunboats and 2 small tenders, under the command of Lieutenant Thomas Catesby Jones. It was impossible for the British to transport their troops across Lake Borgne, as contemplated, until this flotilla was destroyed. Accordingly, on the night of the 12th, 42 launches, armed with 24-, 18-, and 12-pounder carronades, and 3 unarmed gigs, carrying 980 seamen and marines, under the orders of Captain Lockyer,[1] pushed off from the *Armida*, 38 in three divisions; the first under the command of Captain Lockyer, the second under Captain Montresor, and the third under Captain Roberts.[2] Lieuten-

[1] James, vi., 521.

[2] Letter of Captain Lockyer to Vice-Admiral Cochrane, December 18, 1814.

ant Jones was at anchor with his boats at the Malheureux Islands, when he discovered, on the 13th, the British flotilla advancing toward Port Christian. He at once despatched the *Seahorse* of one 6-pounder and 14 men, under Sailing-master William Johnston, to destroy the stores at Bay St. Louis. She moored herself under the bank, where she was assisted by two 6-pounders. There the British attacked her with seven of their smaller boats, which were repulsed after sustaining for nearly half an hour a very destructive fire.[1] However, Mr. Johnston had to burn his boat to prevent it from being taken by a larger force. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Jones got under way with the five gun vessels, trying to reach Les Petites Coquilles, near a small fort at the mouth of a creek. But as the wind was light and baffling, and the current very strong, the effort was given up, and the vessels came to anchor off Malheureux Island passage at 1 A.M. on the 14th.[2] The other tender, the *Alligator*, Sailing-master Sheppard, of one 4-pounder and 8 men, was discovered next morning trying to get to her consorts and taken with a rush by Captain Roberts and his division. At daybreak, Lieutenant Jones saw the British boats about nine miles to the eastward, and moored his five gun vessels abreast in the channel,

[1] James, vi., 521.
[2] Official letter of Lieutenant Jones, March 12, 1815.

with their boarding-nettings triced up, and everything in readiness; but the force of the current drifted two of them, Nos. 156 and 163, a hundred yards down the pass and out of line, No. 156 being the headmost of all. Their exact force was as follows: No. 156, Lieutenant Jones, 41 men and 5 guns (one long 24 and four 12-pound carronades); No. 163, Sailing-master George Ulrick, 21 men, 3 guns (one long 24 and two 12-pound carronades); No. 162, Lieutenant Robert Speddes, 35 men, 5 guns (one long 24 and four light 6's); No. 5, Sailing-master John D. Ferris, 36 men, 5 guns (one long 24, four 12-pound carronades); No. 23, Lieutenant Isaac McKeever, 39 men and 5 guns (one long 32 and four light 6's). There were thus, in all, 182 men and a broadside of 14 guns, throwing 212 pounds of shot. The British forces amounted, as I have said, to 980 men, and (supposing they had equal numbers of 24's, 18's, and 12's) the flotilla threw seven hundred and fifty-eight pounds of shot. The odds, of course, were not as much against the Americans as these figures would make them, for they were stationary, and had some long, heavy guns and boarding-nettings; on the other hand, the fact that two of their vessels had drifted out of line was a very serious misfortune. At any rate, the odds were great enough, considering that he had British sailors to deal with, to make it anything but a

cheerful look-out for Lieutenant Jones; but, nowise daunted by the almost certain prospect of defeat, the American officers and seamen prepared very coolly for the fight. In this connection, it should be remembered that simply to run the boats on shore would have permitted the men to escape, if they had chosen to do so.

Captain Lockyer acted as coolly as his antagonist. When he had reached a point just out of gunshot, he brought the boats to a grapnel to let the sailors eat breakfast and get a little rest after the fatigue of their long row. When his men were rested and in good trim, he formed the boats in open order, and they pulled gallantly on against the strong current. At 10.50, the Americans opened fire from their long guns, and in about fifteen minutes the cannonade became general on both sides.[1] At 11.50, Captain Lockyer's barge was laid alongside No. 156, and a very obstinate struggle ensued, "in which the greater part of the officers and crew of the barge were killed or wounded,"[2] including among the latter the gallant captain himself, severely, and his equally gallant first lieutenant, Mr. Pratt, of the *Seahorse* frigate, mortally. At the same time Lieutenant Tatnall (of the *Tonnant*) also laid his barge aboard the gunboat, only to have it sunk; another shared the same fate; and the assailants were for the mo-

[1] Lieutenant Jones's letter. [2] Captain Lockyer's letter.

and wounded. Captain Lockyer, on the other hand, gives the Americans 225 men and three additional light guns. But on the main points the two accounts agree perfectly. The victors certainly deserve great credit for the perseverance, gallantry, and dash they displayed; but still more belongs to the vanquished for the cool skill and obstinate courage with which they fought, although with the certainty of ultimate defeat before them,—which is always the severest test of bravery. No comment is needed to prove the effectiveness of their resistance. Even James says that the Americans made an obstinate struggle, that Lieutenant Jones displayed great personal bravery, and that the British loss was very severe.

On the night of December 23d, General Jackson beat up the quarters of the British encamped on the bank of the Mississippi. The attack was opened by Captain Patterson in the schooner *Carolina*, 14; she was manned by 70 men, and mounted on each side six 12-pound carronades and one long 12. Dropping down the stream unobserved till opposite the bivouac of the troops, and so close to the shore that his first command to fire was plainly heard by the foe, Patterson opened a slaughtering cannonade on the flank of the British, and kept it up without suffering any loss in return, as long as the attack lasted. But, on the 27th, the British had their revenge, attacking the

little schooner as she lay at anchor, unable to ascend the stream on account of the rapid current and a strong head-wind. The assailants had a battery of five guns, throwing hot shot and shell, while the only gun of the schooner's that would reach was the long 12. After half an hour's fighting the schooner was set on fire and blown up; the crew escaped to the shore with the loss of 7 men killed and wounded. The only remaining vessel, exclusive of some small, unarmed row-boats was the *Louisiana*, 16, carrying on each side eight long 24's. She was of great assistance in the battle of the 28th, throwing during the course of the cannonade over 800 shot, and suffering very little in return.[1] Afterward, the American seamen and marines played a most gallant part in all the engagements on shore; they made very efficient artillerists.

SUMMARY

The following vessels were got ready for sea during this year[2]:

Name	Rig	Where Built	Cost	Men	Guns	Tons	Remarks
Wasp,	Ship	Newburyport	$77,459.60	160	22	509	Built
Frolic,	"	Boston	72,094.82	"	"	"	"
Peacock,	"	New York	75,644.36	"	"	"	"
Ontario,	"	Baltimore	59,343.69	"	"	"	"
Erie,	"	"	56,174.36	"	"	"	"

[1] Cooper, ii., p. 320.

[2] *American State Papers*, xiv., p. 828; also, Emmons's *Statistical History*.

SUMMARY (*continued*)

Name	Rig	Where Built	Cost	Men	Guns	Tons	Remarks
Tom Bowline,	Schooner	Portsmouth	$13,000.00	90	12	260	Purchased
Lynx,	"	Washington		50	6		Built
Epervier,	Brig	England	50,000.00	130	18	477	Captured
Flambeau,	"	Baltimore	14,000.00	90	14	300	Purchased
Spark,	"	"	17,389.00	"	"	"	"
Firefly,	"	"	17,435.00	"	"	333	"
Torch,	Schooner	"	13,000.00	60	12	260	"
Spitfire,	"	"	20,000.00	"	"	286	"
Eagle,	"	N. O.		"	"	270	"
Prometheus,	"	Philadelphia	20,000.00	"	"	290	"
Chippeway,	Brig	R. I.	52,000.00	90	14	390	"
Saranac,	"	Middleton	26,000.00	"	"	360	"
Boxer,	"	"	26,000.00	"	"	370	"
Despatch,	Schooner			23	2	52	

The first five small vessels that are bracketed were to cruise under Commodore Porter; the next four under Commodore Perry; but the news of peace arrived before either squadron put to sea. Some of the vessels under this catalogue were really almost ready for sea at the end of 1813; and some that I have included in the catalogue of 1815 were almost completely fitted at the end of 1814,—but this arrangement is practically the best.

LIST OF VESSELS LOST TO THE BRITISH

1. *Destroyed by British Armies*

Name	Tons	Guns	
Columbia.....	1508	52	Destroyed to prevent
Adams.....	760	28	them falling into hands
Argus.....	509	22	of enemy.
Carolina.....	230	14	Destroyed by battery.
	3007	116	

2. *Captured, etc., by British Navy on Ocean*

Name	Tons	Guns	
Essex.....	860	46	Captured by frigate and corvette.
Frolic.....	509	22	" by frigate and schooner.
Rattlesnake..	258	16	" by frigate.
Syren.....	250	16	" by seventy-four.
	4877	100	

Total, 7884 tons. 216 guns.

There were also a good many gunboats, which I do not count, because, as already said, they were often not as large as the barges that were sunk and taken in attacking them, as at Craney Island, etc.

LIST OF VESSELS TAKEN FROM BRITISH

1. *Captured by American Privateers*

Name	Tons	Guns
Ballahou.....	86	4
Landrail.....	76	4
	162	8

2. *Captured, etc., by American Navy on Ocean*

Name	Tons	Guns	
Epervier....	477	18	Captured by sloop *Peacock*.
Avon.....	477	20	Sunk " " *Wasp*.
Reindeer....	477	19	" " " "
Pictou.....	300	14	Captured by frigate.
	1731	71	

3. *Sunk in Attacking Fort*

Name	Tons	Guns
Hermes.....	500	22

Total, 2393 tons. 101 guns.

Taking into account the losses on the lakes, there was not very much difference in the amount of damage done to each combatant by the other; but, both as regards the material results and the moral effects, the balance inclined largely to the Americans. The chief damage done to our navy was by the British land forces, and consisted mainly in forcing us to burn an unfinished frigate and sloop. On the ocean, our three sloops were captured in each case by an overwhelming force, against which no resistance could be made, and the same was true of the captured British schooner. The *Essex* certainly gained as much honor as her opponents. There were but three single-ship actions, in all of which the Americans were so superior in force as to give them a very great advantage; nevertheless, in two of them the victory was won with such perfect impunity, and the

difference in the loss and damage inflicted was so very great, that I doubt if the result would have been affected if the odds had been reversed. In the other case, that of the *Reindeer*, the defeated party fought at a still greater disadvantage, and yet came out of the conflict with full as much honor as the victor. No man with a particle of generosity in his nature can help feeling the most honest admiration for the unflinching courage and cool skill displayed by Captain Manners and his crew. It is worthy of notice (remembering the sneers of so many of the British authors at the "wary circumspection" of the Americans) that Captain Manners, who has left a more honorable name than any other British commander of the war, excepting Captain Broke, behaved with the greatest caution as long as it would serve his purpose, while he showed the most splendid personal courage afterward. It is this combination of courage and skill that made him so dangerous an antagonist; it showed that the traditional British bravery was not impaired by refusing to adhere to the traditional British tactics of rushing into a fight "bull-headed." Needless exposure to danger denotes not so much pluck as stupidity. Captain Manners had no intention of giving his adversary any advantage he could prevent. No one can help feeling regret that he was killed; but if he was to fall, what more

glorious death could he meet? It must be remembered that, while paying all homage to Captain Manners, Captain Blakely did equally well. It was a case where the victory between two combatants, equal in courage and skill, was decided by superior weight of metal and number of men.

PRIZES MADE

Name of ship	Number of prizes
President	3
Constitution	6
Adams	10
Frolic	2
Wasp	15
Peacock	15
Hornet	1
Small craft	35
	87

CHAPTER II

1814

ON THE LAKES

ONTARIO—The contest one of ship-building merely—Extreme caution of the commanders, verging on timidity—Yeo takes Oswego, and blockades Sackett's Harbor—British gunboats captured—Chauncy blockades Kingston.—ERIE—Captain Sinclair's unsuccessful expedition—Daring and successful cutting-out expeditions of the British.—CHAMPLAIN—Macdonough's victory.

ONTARIO

THE winter was spent by both parties in preparing more formidable fleets for the ensuing summer. All the American schooners had proved themselves so unfit for service that they were converted into transports, except the *Sylph*, which was brig-rigged and armed like the *Oneida*. Sackett's Harbor possessed but slight fortifications, and the Americans were kept constantly on the alert, through fear lest the British should cross over. Commodore Chauncy and Mr. Eckford were as unremitting in their exertions as ever. In February, two 22-gun brigs, the *Jefferson* and *Jones*, and one large frigate of 50 guns, the *Superior*, were laid; afterward a

deserter brought in news of the enormous size of one of the new British frigates, and the *Superior* was enlarged to permit her carrying 62 guns. The *Jefferson* was launched on April 7th, the *Jones* on the 10th, and the *Superior* on May 2d—an attempt on the part of the British to blow her up having been foiled a few days before. Another frigate, the *Mohawk*, 42, was at once begun. Neither guns nor men for the first three ships had as yet arrived, but they soon began to come in, as the roads got better and the streams opened. Chauncy and Eckford, besides building ships that were literally laid down in the forest, and seeing that they were armed with heavy guns, which, as well as all their stores, had to be carried overland hundreds of miles through the wilderness, were obliged to settle quarrels that occurred among the men, the most serious being one that arose from a sentinel's accidentally killing a shipwright, whose companions instantly struck work in a body. What was more serious, they had to contend with such constant and virulent sickness, that it almost assumed the proportions of a plague. During the winter it was seldom that two thirds of the force were fit for duty, and nearly a sixth of the whole number of men in the port died before navigation opened.[1]

[1] Cooper mentions that in five months the *Madison* buried a fifth of her crew.

Meanwhile, Yeo had been nearly as active at Kingston, laying down two frigates and a huge line-of-battle ship, but his shipwrights did not succeed in getting the latter ready much before navigation closed. The *Prince Regent*, 58, and *Princess Charlotte*, 42, were launched on April 15th. I shall anticipate somewhat by giving tabular lists of the comparative forces, after the two British frigates, the two American frigates, and the two American brigs had all been equipped and manned. Commodore Yeo's original six cruisers had been all renamed, some of them rearmed, and both the schooners changed into brigs. The *Wolfe*, *Royal George*, *Melville*, *Moira*, *Beresford*, and *Sydney Smith*, were now named, respectively, *Montreal*, *Niagara*, *Star*, *Charwell*, *Netly*, and *Magnet*. On the American side, there had been but slight changes, beyond the alteration of the *Sylph* into a brig armed like the *Oneida*. Of the *Superior's* 62 guns, 4 were very shortly sent on shore again.

CHAUNCY'S SQUADRON

Name	Rig	Tonnage	Crew	Broadside Metal	Armament
Superior....	Ship	1580	500	1050 lbs.	30 long 32's 2 " 24's 26 short 42's
Mohawk....	"	1350	350	554 "	26 long 24's 2 " 18's 14 short 32's

CHAUNCY'S SQUADRON (*continued*)

Name	Rig	Tonnage	Crew	Broadside Metal	Armament
Pike.....	Ship	875	300	360 lbs.	26 long 24's 2 " 24's
Madison....	"	593	200	364 "	2 " 12's 22 short 32's
Jones.....	Brig	500	160	332 "	2 long 12's 20 short 32's
Jefferson...	"	500	160	332 "	2 long 12's 20 short 32's
Sylph.....	"	300	100	180 "	2 long 12's 14 short 24's
Oneida.....	"	243	100	180 "	2 long 12's 14 short 24's
8 vessels		5941	1870	3352 lbs.	228 guns

This is considerably less than James makes it, as he includes all the schooners, which were abandoned as cruisers, and only used as gunboats or transports. Similarly Sir James had a large number of gunboats, which are not included in his cruising force. James thus makes Chauncy's force 2321 men, and a broadside of 4188 lbs.

YEO'S SQUADRON

Name	Rig	Tonnage	Crew	Broadside Metal	Armament
Prince Regent...	Ship	1450	485	872 lbs.	32 long 24's 4 short 68's 22 " 32's
Princess Charlotte..	"	1215	315	604 "	26 long 24's 2 short 68's 14 " 32's
Montreal...	"	637	220	258 "	7 long 24's 18 " 18's

YEO'S SQUADRON (*continued*)

Name	Rig	Tonnage	Crew	Broadside Metal	Armament
Niagara.....	Ship	510	200	332 lbs.	2 long 12's 20 short 32's
Charwell....	Brig	279	110	236 "	2 long 12's 14 short 32's
Star.....	"	262	110	236 "	2 long 12's 14 short 32's
Netly.....	"	216	100	180 "	2 long 12's 14 short 24's
Magnet.....	"	187	80	156 "	2 long 12's 12 short 24's
8 vessels		4756	1620	2874 lbs.	209 guns

This tallies pretty well with James's statement, which (on p. 488) is 1517 men, and a broadside of 2752 lbs. But there are very probably errors as regards the armaments of the small brigs, which were continually changed. At any rate, the American fleet was certainly the stronger, about in the proportion of six to five. The disproportion was enough to justify Sir James in his determination not to hazard a battle, although the odds were certainly not such as British commanders had been previously accustomed to pay much regard to. Chauncy would have acted exactly as his opponent did, had he been similarly placed. The odds against the British commodore were too great to be overcome, where the combatants were otherwise on a par, although the refusal to do battle against them would certainly

preclude Yeo from advancing any claims to *superiority* in skill or courage. The *Princess Charlotte* and *Niagara* were just about equal to the *Mohawk* and *Madison*, and so were the *Charwell* and *Netly* to the *Oneida* and *Sylph;* but both the *Star* and *Magnet* together could hardly have matched either the *Jones* or the *Jefferson*, while the maindeck 32's of the *Superior* gave her a great advantage over the *Prince Regent's* 24's, where the crews were so equal; and the *Pike* was certainly too heavy for the *Montreal*. A decided superiority in the effectiveness of both crews and captains could alone have warranted Sir James Lucas Yeo in engaging, and this superiority he certainly did not possess.

This year, the British architects outstripped ours in the race for supremacy, and Commodore Yeo put out of port with his eight vessels long before the Americans were ready. His first attempt was a successful attack on Oswego. This town is situated some sixty miles distant from Sackett's Harbor, and is the first port on the lake which the stores, sent from the seaboard to Chauncy, reached. Accordingly, it was a place of some little importance, but was very much neglected by the American authorities. It was insufficiently garrisoned, and was defended only by an entirely ruined fort of six guns, two of them dismounted. Commodore Yeo sailed from Kingston to attack it on the 3d of May, having on board his ships a

detachment of 1080 troops. Oswego was garrisoned by less than 300 men,[1] chiefly belonging to a light artillery regiment, with a score or two of militia; they were under the command of Colonel Mitchell. The recaptured schooner *Growler* was in port, with seven guns destined for the harbor; she was sunk by her commander, but afterward raised and carried off by the foe.

On the 5th, Yeo appeared off Oswego and sent in Captain Collier and 13 gunboats to draw the fort's fire; after some firing between them and the four guns mounted in the fort (two long 24's, one long 12, and one long 6), the gunboats retired. The next day the attack was seriously made. The *Princess Charlotte*, *Montreal*, and *Niagara* engaged the batteries, while the *Charwell* and *Star* scoured the woods with grape to clear them of the militia.[2] The debarkation of the troops was superintended by Captain O'Connor, and until it was accomplished the *Montreal* sustained almost the whole fire of the fort, being set on fire three times, and much cut up in hull, masts, and rigging.[3] Under this fire, 800 British troops were landed, under Lieutenant-Colonel Fischer, assisted by 200 seamen, armed with long pikes, under Captain Mul-

[1] General order of General Jacob Brown, by R. Jones, Assistant Adjutant-General, May 12, 1814.

[2] Letter of General Gordon Drummond, May 7, 1814.

[3] Letter of Sir James Lucas Yeo, May 17, 1814.

caster. They moved gallantly up the hill, under a heavy fire, and carried the fort by assault; Mitchell then fell back unmolested to the Falls, about twelve miles above the town, where there was a large quantity of stores. But he was not again attacked. The Americans lost 6 men killed, including Lieutenant Blaeny, 38 wounded, and 25 missing, both of these last falling into the enemy's hands. The British lost 22 soldiers, marines, and seamen (including Captain Hollaway) killed, and 73 (including the gallant Captain Mulcaster dangerously, and Captain Popham slightly) wounded,[1] the total loss being 75—nearly a third of the American force engaged. General Drummond, in his official letter, reports that "the fort being everywhere almost open, the whole of the garrison . . . effected their escape, except about 60 men, half of them wounded." No doubt the fort's being "everywhere almost open" afforded excellent opportunities for retreat; but it was not much of a recommendation of it as a structure intended for defence.

The British destroyed the four guns in the battery, and raised the *Growler* and carried her off, with her valuable cargo of seven long guns. They

[1] Letter of Lieutenant-Colonel V. Fischer, May 17, 1814. James says "18 killed and 64 wounded," why, I do not know; the official report of Colonel Fischer, as quoted, says: "Of the army, 19 killed and 62 wounded; of the navy, 3 killed and 11 wounded."

also carried off a small quantity of ordnance stores and some flour, and burned the barracks; otherwise but little damage was done, and the Americans reoccupied the place at once. It certainly showed great lack of energy on Commodore Yeo's part that he did not strike a really important blow by sending an expedition up to destroy the quantity of stores and ordnance collected at the Falls. But the attack itself was admirably managed. The ships were well placed, and kept up so heavy a fire on the fort as to effectually cover the debarkation of the troops, which was very cleverly accomplished; and the soldiers and seamen behaved with great gallantry and steadiness, their officers leading them, sword in hand, up a long, steep hill, under a destructive fire. It was similar to Chauncy's attacks on York and Fort George, except that in this case the assailants suffered a much severer loss compared to that inflicted on the assailed. Colonel Mitchell managed the defence with skill, doing all he could with his insufficient materials.

After returning to Kingston, Yeo sailed with his squadron for Sackett's Harbor, where he appeared on May 19th and began a strict blockade. This was especially troublesome, because most of the guns and cables for the two frigates had not yet arrived, and though the lighter pieces and stores could be carried overland, the heavier ones could

only go by water, which route was now made dangerous by the presence of the blockading squadron. The very important duty of convoying these great guns was entrusted to Captain Woolsey, an officer of tried merit. He decided to take them by water to Stony Creek, whence they might be carried by land to the Harbor, which was but three miles distant; and on the success of his enterprise depended Chauncy's chances of regaining command of the lake. On the 28th of May, at sunset, Woolsey left Oswego with 19 boats, carrying twenty-one long 32's, ten long 24's, three 42-pound carronades and ten cables—one of the latter for the *Superior*, being a huge rope 22 inches in circumference and weighing 9600 pounds. The boats rowed all through the night, and at sunrise on the 29th, 18 of them found themselves off the Big Salmon River, and, as it was unsafe to travel by daylight, Woolsey ran up into Big Sandy Creek, eight miles from the Harbor. The other boat, containing two long 24's and a cable, got out of line, ran into the British squadron, and was captured. The news she brought induced Sir James Yeo at once to send out an expedition to capture the others. He accordingly despatched Captains Popham and Spilsbury in two gunboats, one armed with one 68-pound and one 24-pound carronade, and the other with a long 32, accompanied by three cutters and a gig, mounting be-

tween them two long 12's and two brass 6's, with a total of 180 men.[1] They rode up to Sandy Creek and lay off its mouth all the night, and began ascending it shortly after daylight on the 30th. Their force, however, was absurdly inadequate for the accomplishment of their object. Captain Woolsey had been reinforced by some Oneida Indians, a company of light artillery, and some militia, so that his only care was, not to repulse, but to capture the British party entire, and even this did not need any exertion. He accordingly despatched Major Appling down the river with 120 riflemen and some Indians to lie in ambush.[3] When going up the creek the British marines, under Lieutenant Cox, were landed on the left bank, and the small-arm men, under Lieutenant Brown, on the right bank; while the two captains rowed up the stream between them, throwing grape into the bushes to disperse the Indians. Major Appling waited until the British were close up, when his riflemen opened with so destructive

[1] James, vi., 487; while Cooper says 186, James says the British loss was 18 killed and 50 wounded; Major Appling says: "14 were killed, 28 wounded, and 27 marines and 106 sailors captured."

[2] Letter from Major D. Appling, May 30, 1814.

[3] Letter of Capt. M. T. Woolsey, June 1, 1814. There were about 60 Indians; in all, the American force amounted to 180 men. James adds 30 riflemen, 140 Indians, and "a large body of militia and cavalry,"—none of whom were present.

a volley as to completely demoralize and "stampede" them, and their whole force was captured with hardly any resistance, the Americans having only one man slightly wounded. The British loss was severe,—18 killed and 50 dangerously wounded, according to Captain Popham's report, as quoted by James; or "14 killed and 28 wounded," according to Major Appling's letter. It was a very clever and successful ambush.

On June 6th, Yeo raised the blockade of the Harbor, but Chauncy's squadron was not in condition to put out till six weeks later, during which time nothing was done by either fleet, except that two very gallant cutting-out expeditions were successfully attempted by Lieutenant Francis H. Gregory, U. S. N. On June 16th, he left the Harbor, accompanied by Sailing-masters Vaughan and Dixon and 22 seamen, in three gigs, to intercept some of the enemy's provision schooners; on the 19th he was discovered by the British gunboat *Black Snake*, of one 18-pound carronade and 18 men, commanded by Captain H. Landon. Lieutenant Gregory dashed at the gunboat and carried it without the loss of a man; he was afterward obliged to burn it, but he brought the prisoners, chiefly royal marines, safely into port. On the 1st of July, he again started out, with Messrs. Vaughan and Dixon and two gigs. The plucky little party suffered greatly from hunger, but on

the 5th, he made a sudden descent on Presque Isle, and burned a 14-gun schooner just ready for launching; he was off before the foe could assemble and reached the Harbor in safety next day.

On July 31st, Commodore Chauncy sailed with his fleet; some days previously the larger British vessels had retired to Kingston, where a 100-gun two-decker was building. Chauncy sailed up to the head of the lake, where he intercepted the small brig *Magnet*. The *Sylph* was sent in to destroy her, but her crew ran her ashore and burned her. The *Jefferson*, *Sylph*, and *Oneida* were left to watch some other small craft in the Niagara; the *Jones* was kept cruising between the Harbor and Oswego, and with the four larger vessels Chauncy blockaded Yeo's four large vessels lying in Kingston. The four American vessels were in the aggregate of 4398 tons, manned by rather more than 1350 men, and presenting in broadside 77 guns, throwing 2328 lbs. of shot. The four British vessels measured in all *about* 3812 tons, manned by 1220 men, and presenting in broadside 74 guns, throwing 2066 lbs. of shot. The former were thus superior by about 15 per cent., and Sir James Yeo very properly declined to fight with the odds against him, although it was a nicer calculation than British commanders had been accustomed to enter into.

Major-General Brown had written to Commodore Chauncy on July 13th: "I do not doubt my ability to meet the enemy in the field and to march in any direction over his country, your fleet carrying for me the necessary supplies. We can threaten Forts George and Niagara, and carry Burlington Heights and York, and proceed direct to Kingston and carry that place. For God's sake, let me see you: Sir James will not fight." To which Chauncy replied: "I shall afford every assistance in my power to co-operate with the army whenever it can be done without losing sight of the great object for the attainment of which this fleet has been created,—the capture or destruction of the enemy's fleet. But that I consider the primary object. . . . We are intended to seek and fight the enemy's fleet, and I shall not be diverted from my efforts to effectuate it by any sinister attempt to render us subordinate to, or an appendage of, the army." That is, by any "sinister attempt" to make him co-operate intelligently in a really well-concerted scheme of invasion. In further support of these noble and independent sentiments, he writes to the Secretary of the Navy on August 10th[1]: "I told him [General Brown] that I should not visit the head of the lake unless the enemy's fleet did so.

[1] See Niles, vii., 12, and other places (under "Chauncy," in index).

. . . To deprive the enemy of an apology for not meeting me, I have sent ashore four guns from the *Superior* to reduce her armament in number to an equality with the *Prince Regent*, yielding the advantage of their 68-pounders. The *Mohawk* mounts two guns less than the *Princess Charlotte*, and the *Montreal* and *Niagara* are equal to the *Pike* and *Madison*." He here justifies his refusal to co-operate with General Brown by saying that he was of only equal force with Sir James, and that he has deprived the latter of "an apology" for not meeting him. This last was not at all true. The *Mohawk* and *Madison* were just about equal to the *Princess Charlotte* and *Niagara;* but the *Pike* was half as strong again as the *Montreal;* and Chauncy could very well afford to "yield the advantage of their 68-pounders," when, in return, Sir James had to yield the advantage of Chauncy's long 32's and 42-pound carronades. The *Superior* was a 32-pounder frigate, and, even without her four extra guns, was about a fourth heavier than the *Prince Regent* with her 24-pounders. Sir James was not acting more warily than Chauncy had acted during June and July, 1813. Then he had a fleet which tonned 1701, was manned by 680 men, and threw at a broadside 1099 lbs. of shot; and he declined to go out of port or in any way try to check the operation of Yeo's fleet, which tonned 2091, was

manned by 770 men, and threw at a broadside 1374 lbs. of shot. Chauncy then acted perfectly proper, no doubt, but he could not afford to sneer at Yeo for behaving in the same way. Whatever either commander might write, in reality he well knew that his officers and crew were, man for man, just about on a par with those of his antagonists, and so, after the first brush or two, he was exceedingly careful to see that the odds were not against him. Chauncy, in his petulant answers to Brown's letter, ignored the fact that his superiority of force would prevent his opponent from giving battle, and would, therefore, prevent anything more important than a blockade occurring.

His ideas of the purpose for which his command had been created were erroneous and very hurtful to the American cause. That purpose was not, except incidentally, "the destruction of the enemy's fleet"; and, if it was, he entirely failed to accomplish it. The real purpose was to enable Canada to be successfully invaded, or to assist in repelling an invasion of the United States. These services could only be efficiently performed by acting in union with the land forces, for his independent action could evidently have little effect. The only important services he had performed had been in attacking Forts George and York, where he *had* been rendered "subordinate to, and an appendage of, the army." His

only chance of accomplishing anything lay in similar acts of co-operation, and he refused to do these. Had he acted as he ought to have done, and assisted Brown to the utmost, he would certainly have accomplished much more than he did, and might have enabled Brown to assault Kingston, when Yeo's fleet would, of course, have been captured. The insubordination, petty stickling for his own dignity, and lack of appreciation of the necessity of acting in concert that he showed, were the very faults which proved most fatal to the success of our various land commanders in the early part of the war. Even had Chauncy's assistance availed nothing, he could not have accomplished less than he did. He remained off Kingston blockading Yeo, being once or twice blown off by gales. He sent Lieutenant Gregory, accompanied by Midshipman Hart and six men, in to reconnoitre on August 25th; the lieutenant ran across two barges containing thirty men, and was captured after the midshipman had been killed and the lieutenant and four men wounded. On September 21st, he transported General Izard and 3000 men from Sackett's Harbor to the Genesee; and then again blockaded Kingston until the two-decker was nearly completed, when he promptly retired to the Harbor.

The equally cautious Yeo did not come out on the lake till October 15th; he did not indulge in

the empty and useless formality of blockading his antagonist, but assisted the British army on the Niagara frontier till navigation closed, about November 21st. A couple of days before, Midshipman McGowan headed an expedition to blow up the two-decker (named the *St. Lawrence*) with a torpedo, but was discovered by two of the enemy's boats, which he captured and brought in; the attempt was abandoned, because the *St. Lawrence* was found not to be lying in Kingston.

For this year, the material loss again fell heaviest on the British, amounting to one 14-gun brig burned by her crew, one 10-gun schooner burned on the stocks, three gunboats, three cutters, and one gig captured; while, in return, the Americans lost one schooner loaded with seven guns, one boat loaded with two, and a gig captured and four guns destroyed at Oswego. In men, the British loss was heavier still, relatively to that of the Americans, being in killed, wounded, and prisoners, about 300 to 80. But in spite of this loss and damage, which was too trivial to be of any account to either side, the success of the season was with the British, inasmuch as they held command over the lake for more than four months, during which time they could co-operate with their army; while the Americans held it for barely two months and a half. In fact, the conduct of the two fleets on Lake Ontario during the latter part of the war

was almost farcical. As soon as one, by building, acquired the superiority, the foe at once retired to port, where he waited until *he* had built another vessel or two, when he came out, and the other went into port in turn. Under such circumstances it was hopeless ever to finish the contest by a stand-up sea-fight, each commander calculating the chances with mathematical exactness. The only hope of destroying the enemy's fleet was by co-operating with the land forces in a successful attack on his main post, when he would be forced to be either destroyed or to fight—and this co-operation Chauncy refused to give. He seems to have been an excellent organizer, but he did not use (certainly not in the summer of 1813) his materials by any means to the best advantage. He was hardly equal to his opponent, and the latter seems to have been little more than an average officer. Yeo blundered several times, as in the attack on Sackett's Harbor, in not following up his advantage at Oswego, in showing so little resource in the action off the Genesee, etc., and he was not troubled by any excess of daring; but during the period when he was actually cruising against Chauncy on the lake, he certainly showed to better advantage than the American did. With an inferior force he won a partial victory over his opponent off Niagara, and then kept him in check for six weeks; while

Chauncy, with his superior force, was not only partially defeated once, but, when he did gain a partial victory, failed to take advantage of it.

In commenting upon the timid and dilatory tactics of the two commanders on Ontario, however, it must be remembered that the indecisive nature of the results attained had been often paralleled by the numerous similar encounters that took place on the ocean during the wars of the preceding century. In the War of the American Revolution, the English fought some nineteen fleet actions with the French, Dutch, and Spaniards; one victory was gained over the French, and one over the Spaniards, while the seventeen others were all indecisive, both sides claiming the victory, and neither winning it. Of course, some of them, though indecisive as regards loss and damages, were strategetical victories; thus, Admiral Arbuthnot beat back Admiral Barras off the Chesapeake, in March of 1781; and near the same place in September of the same year the French had their revenge in the victory (one at least in its results) of the Comte de Grasse over Sir Thomas Graves. In the five desperate and bloody combats which De Suffrein waged with Sir Edward Hughes in the East Indies, the laurels were very evenly divided. These five conflicts were not rendered indecisive by any overwariness in manœuvring, for De Suffrein's attacks were carried

out with as much boldness as skill, and his stubborn antagonist was never inclined to baulk him of a fair battle; but the two hardy fighters were so evenly matched that they would pound one another till each was helpless to inflict injury. Very different were the three consecutive battles that took place in the same waters on the 25th of April, 1758, the 3d of August, 1758, and on the 10th of September, 1759, between Pocock and d'Aché,[1] where, by skilful manœuvring, the French admiral saved his somewhat inferior force from capture, and the English admiral gained indecisive victories. M. Rivière, after giving a most just and impartial account of the battles, sums up with the following excellent criticism[2]:

"It is this battle, won by Hawke, the 20th of November, 1757, and the combats of Pocock and d'Aché, from which date two distinct schools in the naval affairs of the eighteenth century: one of these was all for promptness and audacity, which were regarded as the indispensable conditions for victory; the other, on the contrary, praised skilful delays and able evolutions, and created success by science united to prudence.

[1] *La Marine Française sous le Règne de Louis XV.*, par Henri Rivière, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. (Paris et Toulon, 1859). Pp. 385 and 439.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 425. I pay more attention to the sense than to the letter in my translation.

. . . But these two schools were true only according to circumstances, not absolutely. When two fleets of equal worth are facing one another, as in the War of the American Revolution, then tactics should come into play, and audacity would often be mere foolhardiness. If it happens, on the other hand, as in the Republic, or during the last years of Louis XV., that an irresolute fleet, without organization, has to contend with a fleet prepared in every way, then, on the part of this last, audacity is wisdom and prudence would be cowardice, for it would give an enemy who distrusts himself time to become more hardy. The only school always true is that one which, freed from all routine, produces men whose genius will unite in one, in knowing how to apply them appropriately, the audacity which will carry off victory, and the prudence which knows how to obtain it in preparing for it."

These generalizations are drawn from the results of mighty battles, but they apply just as well to the campaigns carried on on a small scale, or even to single-ship actions. Chauncy, as already said, does not deserve the praise which most American historians, and especially Cooper, have lavished on him, as well as on all our other officers of that period. Such indiscriminate eulogy entirely detracts from the worth of the writer's favorable criticisms. Our *average* commander was, I firmly

believe, at that time superior to the average commander of any other nation; but to get at this average we must include Chauncy, Rodgers, and Angus, as well as Hull, Macdonough, Perry, Porter, Bainbridge, Biddle, Lawrence, and Warrington.

Sir James Yeo did to the full as well as his opponent, and like him was a good organizer; but he did little enough. His campaigns must be considered as being conducted well or ill, according as he is believed to have commanded better men than his opponent, or not. If, as many British writers contend, his crews were an overmatch for the Americans, man for man, even to a slight degree, then Yeo's conduct was very cowardly; if, on the contrary, the officers and men of the two fleets were on a par, then he acted properly and outgeneralled his opponent. It is to be regretted that most of the histories written on the subject, on either side of the Atlantic, should be of the "hurrah" order of literature, with no attempt whatever to get at the truth, but merely to explain away the defeats or immensely exaggerate the victories suffered or gained by their own side.

ERIE AND THE UPPER LAKES

Hitherto the vessels on these lakes (as well as on Ontario) had been under the command of Commodore Chauncy; but they were now formed

into a separate department, under Captain Arthur Sinclair. The Americans had, of course, complete supremacy, and no attempt was seriously made to contest it with them; but they received a couple of stinging, if not very important defeats. It is rather singular that here the British, who began with a large force, while there was none whatever to oppose it, should have had it by degrees completely annihilated; and should have then, and not till then, when apparently rendered harmless, have turned round and partially revenged themselves by two cutting-out expeditions which were as boldly executed as they were skilfully planned.

Captain Sinclair sailed into Lake Huron with the *Niagara*, *Caledonia*, *Ariel*, *Scorpion*, and *Tigress*, and on July 20th burned the fort and barracks of St. Joseph, which were abandoned by their garrison. On August 4th, he arrived off the fort of Machilimacinac (Mackinaw), which was situated on such an eminence that the guns of the vessels could not reach it. Accordingly, the troops under Colonel Croghan were landed, covered by the fire of the schooners, very successfully; but when they tried to carry the fort they were driven back with the loss of seventy men. Thence Sinclair sailed to the Nattagawassa Creek, attacked and destroyed a block-house three miles up it, which mounted three light guns, and also a

schooner called the *Nancy;* but the commander of the schooner, Lieutenant Worsley, with his crew, escaped up the river. Captain Sinclair then departed for Lake Erie, leaving the *Scorpion*, Lieutenant Turner, and *Tigress*, Sailing-master Champlin, to blockade the Nattagawassa. News was received by the British from a party of Indians that the two American vessels were five leagues apart, and it was at once resolved to attempt their capture. On the first of September, in the evening, four boats started out, one manned by 20 seamen, under Lieutenant Worsley, the three others by 72 soldiers under Lieutenants Bulger, Armstrong, and Raderhurst of the army—in all 92 men and two guns, a 6- and a 3-pounder. A number of Indians accompanied the expedition but took no part in the fighting. At sunset on the 2d, the boats arrived at St. Mary's Strait, and spent twenty-four hours in finding out where the American schooners were. At 6 P.M., on the 3d, the nearest vessel, the *Tigress*, was made out, six miles off, and they pulled for her. It was very dark, and they were not discovered till they had come within fifty yards, when Champlin at once fired his long 24 at them; before it could be reloaded the four boats had dashed up, those of Lieutenants Worsley and Armstrong placing themselves on the starboard, and those of Lieutenants Bulger and Raderhurst on the port side.

There was a short, sharp struggle, and the schooner was carried. Of her crew of 28 men, 3 were killed and 5, including Mr. Champlin, dangerously wounded. The assailants lost three seamen killed, Lieutenant Bulger, seven soldiers and several seamen wounded.[1] "The defence of this vessel," writes Lieutenant Bulger, "did credit to her officers, who were all severely wounded." Next day, the prisoners were sent on shore, and on the 5th, the *Scorpion* was discovered working up to join her consort, entirely ignorant of what had happened. She anchored about two miles from the *Tigress;* and next morning at 6 o'clock the latter slipped her cable and ran down under the jib and foresail, the American ensign and pendant still flying. When within ten yards of the *Scorpion*, the concealed soldiers jumped up, poured a volley into her which killed two and wounded two men, and the next moment carried her, her surprised crew of thirty men making no resistance. The whole affair reflected great credit on the enterprise and pluck of the British, without being discreditable to the Americans. It was like Lieutenant Elliott's capture of the *Detroit* and *Caledonia*.

Meanwhile, a still more daring cutting-out expe-

[1] Letter of Lieut. A. H. Bulger, September 7, 1814. James says only 3 killed and 8 wounded; but Lieutenant Bulger distinctly says, in addition, "and several seamen wounded."

dition had taken place at the foot of Lake Erie. The three American schooners, *Ohio*, *Somers*, and *Porcupine*, each with thirty men, under Lieutenant Conkling, were anchored just at the outlet of the lake, to cover the flank of the works at Fort Erie. On the night of August 12, Captain Dobbs, of the *Charwell*, and Lieutenant Radcliffe, of the *Netly*, with seventy-five seamen and marines from their two vessels, which were lying off Fort Erie, resolved to attempt the capture of the schooners. The seamen carried the captain's gig upon their shoulders from Queenstown to Frenchman's Creek, a distance of twenty miles; thence, by the aid of some militia, five batteaux as well as the gig were carried eight miles across the woods to Lake Erie, and the party (whether with or without the militia, I do not know) embarked in them. Between 11 and 12 the boats were discovered a short distance ahead of the *Somers* and hailed. They answered "Provision boats," which deceived the officer on deck, as such boats had been in the habit of passing and repassing continually during the night. Before he discovered his mistake the boats drifted across his hawse, cut his cables, and ran him aboard with a volley of musketry, which wounded two of his men, and before the others could get on deck the schooner was captured. In another moment, the British boats were alongside the *Ohio*, Lieutenant

Conkling's vessel. Here the people had hurried on deck, and there was a moment's sharp struggle, in which the assailants lost Lieutenant Radcliffe and one seaman killed and six seamen and marines wounded; but on board the *Ohio* Lieutenant Conkling and Sailing-master M. Cally were shot down, one seaman killed, and four wounded, and Captain Dobbs carried her, sword in hand. The *Porcupine* was not molested, and made no effort to interfere with the British in their retreat; so they drifted down the rapids with their two prizes and secured them below. The boldness of this enterprise will be appreciated when it is remembered that but 75 British seamen (unless there were some militia along), with no artillery, attacked and captured two out of three fine schooners, armed each with a long 32 or 24, and an aggregate of 90 men; and that this had been done in waters where the gig and five batteaux of the victors were the only British vessels afloat.

CHAMPLAIN

This lake, which had hitherto played but an inconspicuous part, was now to become the scene of the greatest naval battle of the war. A British army of 11,000 men, under Sir George Prevost, undertook the invasion of New York by advancing up the western bank of Lake Champlain. This

advance was impracticable unless there was a sufficiently strong British naval force to drive back the American squadron at the same time. Accordingly, the British began to construct a frigate, the *Confiance*, to be added to their already existing force, which consisted of a brig, two sloops, and twelve or fourteen gunboats. The Americans already possessed a heavy corvette, a schooner, a small sloop, and ten gunboats or row-gallies; they now began to build a large brig, the *Eagle*, which was launched about the 16th of August. Nine days later, on the 25th, the *Confiance* was launched. The two squadrons were equally deficient in stores, etc.; the *Confiance* having locks to her guns, some of which could not be used, while the American schooner *Ticonderoga* had to fire her guns by means of pistols flashed at the touch-holes (like Barclay on Lake Erie). Macdonough and Downie were hurried into action before they had time to prepare themselves thoroughly; but it was a disadvantage common to both, and arose from the nature of the case, which called for immediate action. The British army advanced slowly toward Plattsburg, which was held by General Macomb with less than 2000 effective American troops. Captain Thomas Macdonough, the American commodore, took the lake a day or two before his antagonist, and came to anchor in Plattsburg Harbor. The British fleet,

under Captain George Downie, moved from Isle aux Noix, on September 8th, and on the morning of the 11th sailed into Plattsburg Harbor.

The American force consisted of the ship *Saratoga*, Captain T. Macdonough, of about 734 tons,[1] carrying eight long 24-pounders, six 42-pound and twelve 32-pound carronades; the brig *Eagle*, Captain Robert Henly, of about 500 tons, carrying eight long 18's and twelve 32-pound carronades; schooner *Ticonderoga*, Lieutenant-Commander Stephen Cassin, of about 350 tons, carrying eight long 12-pounders, four long 18-pounders, and five 32-pound carronades; sloop *Preble*, Lieutenant Charles Budd, of about 80 tons, mounting seven long 9's; the row-gallies *Borer*, *Centipede*, *Nettle*, *Allen*, *Viper*, and *Burrows*, each of about 70 tons, and mounting one long 24- and one short 18-pounder; and the row-gallies *Wilmer*, *Ludlow*, *Aylwin*, and *Ballard*, each of about 40 tons, and mounting one long 12. James puts down the

[1] In the Naval Archives (*Masters-Commandant Letters*, 1814, i., No. 134) is a letter from Macdonough in which he states that the *Saratoga* is intermediate in size between the *Pike*, of 875, and the *Madison*, of 593 tons, this would make her 734. The *Eagle* was very nearly the size of the *Lawrence* or *Niagara*, on Lake Erie. The *Ticonderoga* was originally a small steamer, but Commodore Macdonough had her schooner-rigged because he found that her machinery got out of order on almost every trip that she took. Her tonnage is only approximately known, but she was of the same size as the *Linnet*.

number of men on board the squadron as 950,—merely a guess, as he gives no authority. Cooper says "about 850 men, including officers, and a small detachment of soldiers to act as marines." Lossing (p. 866, note 1) says 882 in all. Vol. xiv. of the *American State Papers* contains on page 572 the prize-money list presented by the purser, George Beale, Jr. This numbers the men (the dead being represented by their heirs or executors) up to 915, including soldiers and seamen, but many of the numbers are omitted, probably owing to the fact that their owners, though belonging on board, happened to be absent on shore or in the hospital; so that the actual number of names tallies very closely with that given by Lossing; and, accordingly, I shall take that.[1] The total number of men in the gallies (including a number of soldiers, as there were not enough sailors) was

[1] In the Naval Archives are numerous letters from Macdonough, in which he states continually that, as fast as they arrive, he substitutes sailors for the soldiers with which the vessels were originally manned. Men were continually being sent ashore on account of sickness. In the Bureau of Navigation is the log-book of "sloop of war *Surprise*, Captain Robert Henly" (*Surprise* was the name the *Eagle* originally went by). It mentions from time to time that men were buried and sent ashore to the hospital (five being sent ashore on September 2d); and finally mentions that the places of the absent were partially filled by a draft of twenty-one soldiers, to act as marines. The notes on the day of battle are very brief.

350. The exact proportions in which this force was distributed among the gunboats cannot be told, but it may be roughly said to be 41 in each large galley, and 26 in each small one. The complement of the *Saratoga* was 210; of the *Eagle* 130, of the *Ticonderoga*, 100, and of the *Preble*, 30; but the first three had also a few soldiers distributed between them. The following list is probably pretty accurate as to the aggregate; but there may have been a score or two fewer men on the gunboats, or more on the larger vessels.

MACDONOUGH'S FORCE

Name	Tons	Crew	Broadside	Metal, from long or short guns
Saratoga.....	734	240	414 lbs.	long, 96 short, 318
Eagle.....	500	150	264 "	long, 72 short, 192
Ticonderoga.....	350	112	180 "	long, 84 short, 96
Preble.....	80	30	36 "	long, 36
Six gunboats.....	420	246	252 "	" 144 short, 108
Four gunboats.....	160	104	48 "	long, 48

In all, fourteen vessels of 2244 tons and 882 men, with 86 guns throwing at a broadside 1194 lbs. of shot—480 from long, and 714 from short guns.

The force of the British squadron in guns and ships is known accurately, as most of it was cap-

tured. The *Confiance* rated for years in our lists as a frigate of the class of the *Constellation*, *Congress*, and *Macedonian;* she was thus of over 1200 tons. (Cooper says more, "nearly double the tonnage of the *Saratoga*.") She carried on her main-deck thirty long 24's, fifteen in each broadside. She did not have a complete spar-deck; on her poop which came forward to the mizzen-mast, were two 32-pound (or possibly 42-pound) carronades, and on her spacious topgallant forecastle were four 32- (or 42-) pound carronades, and a long 24 on a pivot.[1] She had aboard her a furnace for heating shot; eight or ten of which heated shot were found with the furnace.[2] This was, of course, a perfectly legitimate advantage. The *Linnet*, Captain Daniel Pring, was a brig of the same size as the *Ticonderoga*, mounting sixteen long 12's. The *Chubb* and *Finch*, Lieutenants James McGhie and William Hicks, were formerly the American sloops *Growler* and *Eagle*, of 112 and 110 tons, respectively. The former mounted

[1] This is her armament as given by Cooper, on the authority of Lieut. E. A. F. Lavallette, who was in charge of her for three months, and went aboard her ten minutes after the *Linnet* struck.

[2] James stigmatizes the statement of Commodore Macdonough about the furnace as "as gross a falsehood as ever was uttered"; but he gives no authority for the denial, and it appears to have been merely an ebullition of spleen on his part. Every American officer who went aboard the *Confiance* saw the furnace and the hot shot.

ten 18-pound carronades and one long 6; the latter six 18-pound carronades, four long 6's, and one short 18. There were twelve gunboats.[1] Five of these were large, of about 70 tons each; three mounted a long 24 and a 32-pound carronade each; one mounted a long 18 and a 32-pound carronade; one a long 18 and a short 18. Seven were smaller, of about 40 tons each; three of these carried each a long 18, and four carried each a 32-pound carronade. There is greater difficulty in finding out the number of men in the British fleet. American historians are unanimous in stating it at from 1000 to 1100; British historians never do anything but copy James blindly. Midshipman Lee of the *Confiance*, in a letter (already quoted) published in the *London Naval Chronicle*, vol. xxxii., p. 292, gives her crew as 300; but more than this amount of dead and prisoners were taken out of her. The number given her by Commander Ward, in his *Naval Tactics*, is probably nearest right—325.[2] The *Linnet* had about 125 men, and the *Chubb* and *Finch* about 50 men each. According to Admiral

[1] Letter of General George Prevost, September 11, 1814. All the American accounts say 13; the British official account had best be taken. James says only ten, but gives no authority; he appears to have been entirely ignorant of all things connected with this action.

[2] James gives her but 270 men, without stating his authority.

Paulding (given by Lossing, in his *Field-Book of the War of 1812*, p. 868) their gunboats averaged 50 men each. This is probably true, as they were manned largely by soldiers, any number of whom could be spared from Sir George Prevost's great army; but it may be best to consider the large ones as having 41, and the small 26 men, which were the complements of the American gunboats of the same sizes.

The following, then, is the force of

DOWNIE'S SQUADRON

Name	Tonnage	Crew	Broadside	From what guns, long or short
Confiance.....	1200	325	480 lbs.	long, 384 short, 96
Linnet.....	350	125	96 "	long, 96
Chubb.....	112	50	96 "	" 6 short, 90
Finch.....	110	50	84 "	long, 12 short, 72
Five gunboats.....	350	205	254 "	long, 12 short, 72
Seven gunboats....	280	182	182 "	long, 54 short, 128

In all, 16 vessels, of about 2402 tons, with 937 men,[1] and a total of 92 guns, throwing at a broadside 1192 lbs., 660 from long and 532 from short pieces.

These are widely different from the figures that

[1] About; there were probably more rather than less.

appear in the pages of most British historians, from Sir Archibald Alison down and up. Thus, in the *History of the British Navy*, by C. D. Yonge (already quoted), it is said that on Lake Champlain "our (the British) force was manifestly and vastly inferior, . . . their (the American) broadside outweighing ours in more than the proportion of three to two, while the difference in their tonnage and in the number of their crews was still more in their favor." None of these historians, or quasi-historians, have made the faintest effort to find out the facts for themselves, following James's figures with blind reliance, and, accordingly, it is only necessary to discuss the latter. This reputable gentleman ends his account (*Naval Occurrences*, p. 424) by remarking that Macdonough wrote as he did because "he knew that nothing would stamp a falsehood with currency equal to a pious expression, . . . his falsehoods equalling in number the lines of his letter." These remarks are interesting as showing the unbiassed and truthful character of the author, rather than for any particular weight they will have in influencing any one's judgment on Commodore Macdonough. James gives the engaged force of the British as "eight vessels, of 1426 tons, with 537 men, and throwing 765 lbs. of shot." To reduce the force down to this, he first excludes the *Finch*, because she "grounded

opposite an American battery *before the engagement commenced*," which reads especially well in connection with Captain Pring's official letter: "Lieutenant Hicks, of the *Finch*, had the mortification to strike on a reef of rocks to the eastward of Crab Island *about the middle of the engagement*." [1] What James means cannot be imagined; no stretch of language will convert "about the middle of" into "before." The *Finch* struck on the reef in consequence of having been disabled and rendered helpless by the fire from the *Ticonderoga*. Adding her force to James's statement (counting her crew only as he gives it), we get nine vessels, 1536 tons, 577 men, 849 lbs. of shot. James also excludes five gunboats, because they ran away almost as soon as the action commenced (vol. vi., p. 501). This assertion is by no means equivalent to the statement in Captain Pring's letter "that the flotilla of gunboats had abandoned the object assigned to them," and, if it was, it would not warrant his excluding the five gunboats. Their flight may have been disgraceful, but they formed part of the attacking force, nevertheless; almost any general could say that he had won against superior numbers if he refused to count in any of his own men whom he suspected of behaving badly. James gives his ten

[1] The italics are mine. The letter is given in full in the *Naval Chronicle*.

gunboats 294 men and 13 guns (two long 24's, five long 18's, six 32-pound carronades), and makes them average 45 tons; adding on the five he leaves out, we get 14 vessels of 1761 tons, with 714 men, throwing at a broadside 1025 lbs. of shot (591 from long guns, 434 from carronades). But Sir George Prevost, in the letter already quoted, says there were 12 gunboats, and the American accounts say more. Supposing the two gunboats James did not include at all to be equal, respectively to one of the largest and one of the smallest of the gunboats, as he gives them (*Naval Occurrences*, p. 417)—that is, one to have had 35 men, a long 24, and a 32-pound carronade, the other, 25 men and a 32-pound carronade—we get for Downie's force 16 vessels, of 1851 tons, with 774 men, throwing at a broadside 1113 lbs. of shot (615 from long guns, 498 from carronades). It must be remembered that so far I have merely corrected James by means of the authorities from which he draws his account—the official letters of the British commanders. I have not brought up a single American authority against him, but have only made such alterations as a writer could with nothing whatever but the accounts of Sir George Prevost and Captain Pring before him to compare with James. Thus it is seen that, according to James himself, Downie really had 774 men to Macdonough's 882, and threw at a broadside

place, James asserts that on the main-deck of the *Confiance* but 13 guns were presented in broadside, two 32-pound carronades being thrust through the bridle-, and two others through the stern-ports; so he excludes two of her guns from the broadside. Such guns would have been of great use to her at certain stages of the combat, and ought to be included in the force. But besides this, the American officers positively say that she had a *broadside* of 15 guns. Adding these two guns, and making a trifling change in the arrangement of the guns in the row-gallies, we get a broadside of 1192 lbs., exactly as I have given it above. There is no difficulty in accounting for the difference of tonnage as given by James and by the Americans, for we have considered the same subject in reference to the battle of Lake Erie. James calculates the American tonnage as if for sea-vessels of deep holds, while, as regards the British vessels, he allows for the shallow holds that all the lake craft had; that is, he gives in one the nominal, in the other the real, tonnage. This fully accounts for the discrepancy. It only remains to account for the difference in the number of men. From James we can get 772. In the first place, we can reason by analogy. I have already shown that, as regards the battle of Lake Erie, he is convicted (by English, not by American, evidence) of having

underestimated Barclay's force by about 25 per cent. If he did the same thing here, the British force was over 1000 strong, and I have no doubt that it was. But we have other proofs. On p. 417 of *Naval Occurrences* he says the complement of the four captured British vessels amounted to 420 men, of whom 54 were killed in action, leaving 366 prisoners, including the wounded. But the report of prisoners, as given by the American authorities, gives 369 officers and seamen unhurt or but slightly wounded, 57 wounded men paroled, and other wounded whose number was unspecified. Supposing this number to have been 82, and adding 54 dead, we would get in all 550 men for the four ships, the number I have adopted in my list. This would make the British wounded 129 instead of 116, as James says; but neither the Americans nor the British seem to have enumerated all their wounded in this fight. Taking into account all these considerations, it will be seen that the figures I have given are probably approximately correct, and, at any rate, indicate pretty closely the *relative* strength of the two squadrons. The slight differences in tonnage and crews (158 tons and 55 men, in favor of the British) are so trivial that they need not be taken into account and we will merely consider the broadside force. In absolute weight of metal, the two combatants were evenly

matched—almost exactly; but, whereas from Downie's broadside of 1192 lbs. 660 were from long and 532 from short guns, of Macdonough's broadside of 1194 lbs. but 480 were from long and 714 from short pieces. The forces were thus equal, except that Downie opposed 180 lbs. from long guns to 182 from carronades; as if ten long 18's were opposed to ten 18-pound carronades. This would make the odds on their face about 10 to 9 against the Americans; in reality they were greater, for the possession of the *Confiance* was a very great advantage. The action is, as regards metal, the exact reverse of those between Chauncy and Yeo. Take, for example, the fight off Burlington on September 28, 1813. Yeo's broadside was 1374 lbs. to Chauncy's 1288; but whereas only 180 of Yeo's was from long guns, of Chauncy's but 536 was from carronades. Chauncy's fleet was thus much the superior. At least, we must say this: if Macdonough beat merely an equal force, then Yeo made a most disgraceful and cowardly flight before an inferior foe; but if we contend that Macdonough's force was inferior to that of his antagonist, then we must admit that Yeo's was in like manner inferior to Chauncy's. These rules work both ways. The *Confiance* was a heavier vessel than the *Pike*, presenting in broadside one long 24- and three 32-pound carronades more than the latter. James (vol. vi., p. 355) says:

"The *Pike* alone was nearly a match for Sir James Yeo's squadron," and Brenton says (vol. ii., 503): "The *General Pike* was more than a match for the whole British squadron." Neither of these writers means quite as much as he says, for the logical result would be that the *Confiance* alone was a match for all of Macdonough's force. Still, it is safe to say that the *Pike* gave Chauncy a great advantage, and that the *Confiance* made Downie's fleet much superior to Macdonough's.

Macdonough saw that the British would be forced to make the attack in order to get the control of the waters. On this long, narrow lake the winds usually blow pretty nearly north or south, and the set of the current is of course northward; all the vessels, being flat and shallow, could not beat to windward well, so there was little chance of the British making the attack when there was a southerly wind blowing. So late in the season there was danger of sudden and furious gales, which would make it risky for Downie to wait outside the bay till the wind suited him; and inside the bay the wind was pretty sure to be light and baffling. Young Macdonough (then but twenty-eight years of age) calculated all these chances very coolly and decided to await the attack at anchor in Plattsburg Bay, with the head of his line so far to the north that it could hardly be turned; and then proceeded to

make all the other preparations with the same foresight. Not only were his vessels provided with springs, but also with anchors to be used astern in any emergency. The *Saratoga* was further prepared for a change of wind, or for the necessity of winding ship, by having a kedge planted broad off on each of her bows, with a hawser and preventer hawser (hanging in bights under water) leading from each quarter to the kedge on that side. There had not been time to train the men thoroughly at the guns; and to make these produce their full effect the constant supervision of the officers had to be exerted. The British were laboring under this same disadvantage, but neither side felt the want very much, as the smooth water, stationary position of the ships, and fair range, made the fire of both sides very destructive.

Plattsburg Bay is deep and opens to the southward; so that a wind which would enable the British to sail up the lake would force them to beat when entering the bay. The east side of the mouth of the bay is formed by Cumberland Head; the entrance is about a mile and a half across, and the other boundary, southwest from the Head, is an extensive shoal, and a small, low island. This is called Crab Island, and on it was a hospital and one six-pounder gun, which was to be manned, in case of necessity, by the strongest

patients. Macdonough had anchored in a north-and-south line a little to the south of the outlet of the Saranac, and out of range of the shore batteries, being two miles from the western shore. The head of his line was so near Cumberland Head that an attempt to turn it would place the opponent under a very heavy fire, while to the south the shoal prevented a flank attack. The *Eagle* lay to the north, flanked on each side by a couple of gunboats; then came the *Saratoga*, with three gunboats between her and the *Ticonderoga*, the next in line; then came three gunboats and the *Preble*. The four large vessels were at anchor; the gallies being under their sweeps and forming a second line about forty yards back, some of them keeping their places and some not doing so. By this arrangement his line could not be doubled upon, there was not room to anchor on his broadside out of reach of his carronades, and the enemy was forced to attack him by standing in bows on.

The morning of September 11th opened with a light breeze from the northeast. Downie's fleet weighed anchor at daylight, and came down the lake with the wind nearly aft, the booms of the two sloops swinging out to starboard. At half-past seven,[1] the people in the ships could see their

[1] The letters of the two commanders conflict a little as to time, both absolutely and relatively. Pring says the action lasted two hours and three quarters; the American accounts,

adversaries' upper sails across the narrow strip of land ending in Cumberland Head, before the British doubled the latter. Captain Downie hove to with his four large vessels when he had fairly opened the bay, and waited for his gallies to overtake him. Then his four vessels filled on the starboard tack and headed for the American line, going abreast, the *Chubb* to the north, heading well to windward of the *Eagle*, for whose bows the *Linnet* was headed, while the *Confiance* was to be laid athwart the hawse of the *Saratoga;* the *Finch* was to leeward with the twelve gunboats, and was to engage the rear of the American line.

As the English squadron stood bravely in, young Macdonough, who feared his foes not at all, but his God a great deal, knelt for a moment, with his officers, on the quarter-deck; and then ensued a few minutes of perfect quiet, the men waiting with grim expectancy for the opening of the fight. The *Eagle* spoke first with her long 18's, but to no effect, for the shot fell short. Then, as the *Linnet* passed the *Saratoga*, she fired her broadside of long 12's, but her shot also fell short, except one that struck a hen-coop which happened to be aboard the *Saratoga*. There was a game-cock inside, and, instead of being frightened at his sudden re-

two hours and twenty minutes. Pring says it began at 8.00; Macdonough says a few minutes before nine, etc. I take the mean time.

lease, he jumped up on a gun-slide, clapped his wings, and crowed lustily. The men laughed and cheered; and immediately afterward Macdonough himself fired the first shot from one of the long guns. The 24-pound ball struck the *Confiance* near the hawse-hole and ranged the length of her deck, killing and wounding several men. All the American long guns now opened and were replied to by the British gallies.

The *Confiance* stood steadily on without replying. But she was baffled by shifting winds, and was soon so cut up, having both her port bow-anchors shot away, and suffering much loss, that she was obliged to port her helm and come to while still nearly a quarter of a mile distant from the *Saratoga*. Captain Downie came to anchor in grand style,—securing everything carefully before he fired a gun, and then opening with a terribly destructive broadside. The *Chubb* and *Linnet* stood farther in, and anchored forward the *Eagle's* beam. Meanwhile, the *Finch* got abreast of the *Ticonderoga*, under her sweeps, supported by the gunboats. The main fighting was thus to take place between the vans, where the *Eagle*, *Saratoga*, and six or seven gunboats were engaged with the *Chubb*, *Linnet*, *Confiance*, and two or three gunboats; while, in the rear, the *Ticonderoga*, the *Preble*, and the other American gallies engaged the *Finch* and the remaining nine or ten

English gallies. The battle at the foot of the line was fought on the part of the Americans to prevent their flank being turned, and on the part of the British to effect that object. At first, the fighting was at long range, but gradually the British gallies closed up, firing very well. The American gallies at this end of the line were chiefly the small ones, armed with one 12-pounder apiece, and they by degrees drew back before the heavy fire of their opponents. About an hour after the discharge of the first gun had been fired, the *Finch* closed up toward the *Ticonderoga*, and was completely crippled by a couple of broadsides from the latter. She drifted helplessly down the line and grounded near Crab Island; some of the convalescent patients manned the 6-pounder and fired a shot or two at her, when she struck, nearly half of her crew being killed or wounded. About the same time the British gunboats forced the *Preble* out of line, whereupon she cut her cable and drifted inshore out of the fight. Two or three of the British gunboats had already been sufficiently damaged by some of the shot from the *Ticonderoga's* long guns to make them wary; and the contest at this part of the line narrowed down to one between the American schooner and the remaining British gunboats, who combined to make a most determined attack upon her. So hastily had the squadron been fitted out that many of

the matches for her guns were at the last moment found to be defective. The captain of one of the divisions was a midshipman, but sixteen years old, Hiram Paulding. When he found the matches to be bad he fired the guns of his section by having pistols flashed at them, and continued this through the whole fight. The *Ticonderoga's* commander, Lieutenant Cassin, fought his schooner most nobly. He kept walking the taffrail amidst showers of musketry and grape, coolly watching the movements of the gallies, and directing the guns to be loaded with canister and bags of bullets, when the enemy tried to board. The British gallies were handled with determined gallantry, under the command of Lieutenant Bell. Had they driven off the *Ticonderoga* they would have won the day for their side, and they pushed up till they were not a boat-hook's length distant, to try to carry her by boarding; but every attempt was repulsed and they were forced to draw off, some of them so crippled by the slaughter they had suffered that they could hardly man the oars.

Meanwhile, the fighting at the head of the line had been even fiercer. The first broadside of the *Confiance*, fired from sixteen long 24's, double-shotted, coolly sighted, in smooth water, at point-blank range, produced the most terrible effect on the *Saratoga*. Her hull shivered all over with the shock, and when the crash subsided nearly half of

her people were seen stretched on deck, for many had been knocked down who were not seriously hurt. Among the slain was her first lieutenant, Peter Gamble; he was kneeling down to sight the bow-gun, when a shot entered the port, split the quoin, and drove a portion of it against his side, killing him without breaking the skin. The survivors carried on the fight with undiminished energy. Macdonough himself worked like a common sailor, in pointing and handling a favorite gun. While bending over to sight it a round shot cut in two the spanker-boom, which fell on his head and struck him senseless for two or three minutes; he then leaped to his feet and continued as before, when a shot took off the head of the captain of the gun and drove it in his face with such a force as to knock him to the other side of the deck. But after the first broadside not so much injury was done; the guns of the *Confiance* had been levelled to point-blank range, and as the quoins were loosened by the successive discharges they were not properly replaced, so that her broadsides kept going higher and higher and doing less and less damage. Very shortly after the beginning of the action her gallant captain was slain. He was standing behind one of the long guns when a shot from the *Saratoga* struck it and threw it completely off the carriage against his right groin, killing him almost instantly. His skin was not

broken; a black mark, about the size of a small plate, was the only visible injury. His watch was found flattened, with its hands pointing to the very second at which he received the fatal blow. As the contest went on, the fire gradually decreased in weight, the guns being disabled. The inexperience of both crews partly caused this. The American sailors overloaded their carronades so as to very much destroy the effect of their fire; when the officers became disabled, the men would cram the guns with shot till the last projected from the muzzle. Of course, this lessened the execution, and also gradually crippled the guns. On board the *Confiance* the confusion was even worse: after the battle the charges of the guns were drawn, and on the side she had fought one was found with a canvas bag containing two round of shot rammed home and wadded without any powder; another with two cartridges and no shot; and a third with a wad below the cartridge.

At the extreme head of the line, the advantage had been with the British. The *Chubb* and *Linnet* had begun a brisk engagement with the *Eagle* and American gunboats. In a short time the *Chubb* had her cable, bowsprit, and main-boom shot away, drifted within the American lines, and was taken possession of by one of the *Saratoga's* midshipmen. The *Linnet* paid no attention to the American gunboats, directing her whole fire

against the *Eagle*, and the latter was, in addition, exposed to part of the fire of the *Confiance*. After keeping up a heavy fire for a long time her springs were shot away, and she came up into the wind, hanging so that she could not return a shot to the well-directed broadsides of the *Linnet*. Henly accordingly cut his cable, started home his topsails, ran down, and anchored by the stern between the inshore of the *Confiance* and *Ticonderoga*, from which position he opened on the *Confiance*. The *Linnet* now directed her attention to the American gunboats, which at this end of the line were very well fought, but he soon drove them off, and then sprung her broadside so as to rake the *Saratoga* on her bows.

Macdonough by this time had his hands full, and his fire was slackening; he was bearing the whole brunt of the action, with the frigate on his beam and the brig raking him. Twice his ship had been set on fire by the hot shot of the *Confiance;* one by one his long guns were disabled by shot, and his carronades were either treated the same way or else rendered useless by excessive overcharging. Finally, but a single carronade was left in the starboard batteries, and on firing it the naval-bolt broke, the gun flew off the carriage and fell down the main hatch, leaving the commodore without a single gun to oppose to the few the *Confiance* still presented. The battle would have

been lost had not Macdonough's foresight provided the means of retrieving it. The anchor suspended astern of the *Saratoga* was let go, and the men hauled in on the hawser that led to the starboard quarter, bringing the ship's stern up over the kedge. The ship now rode by the kedge and by a line that had been bent to a bight in the stream cable, and she was raked badly by the accurate fire of the *Linnet*. By rousing on the line the ship was at length got so far round that the aftermost gun of the port broadside bore on the *Confiance*. The men had been sent forward to keep as much out of harm's way as possible, and now some were at once called back to man the piece, which then opened with effect. The next gun was treated in the same manner; but the ship now hung and would go no farther round. The hawser leading from the port quarter was then got forward under the bows and passed aft to the starboard quarter, and a minute afterward the ship's whole port battery opened with fatal effect. The *Confiance* meanwhile had also attempted to round. Her springs, like those of the *Linnet*, were on the starboard side, and so of course could not be shot away as the *Eagle's* were; but, as she had nothing but springs to rely on, her efforts did little beyond forcing her forward, and she hung with her head to the wind. She had lost over half of her crew, most of her guns on the engaged side

were dismounted, and her stout masts had been splintered till they looked like bundles of matches; her sails had been torn to rags, and she was forced to strike, about two hours after she had fired the first broadside.[1] Without pausing a minute, the *Saratoga* again hauled on her starboard hawser till her broadside was sprung to bear on the *Linnet*, and the ship and brig began a brisk fight, which the *Eagle* from her position could take no part in, while the *Ticonderoga* was just finishing up the British gallies. The shattered and disabled state of the *Linnet's* masts, sails, and yards precluded the most distant hope of Captain Pring's effecting his escape by cutting his cable; but he kept up a most gallant fight with his greatly superior foe, in hopes that some of the gunboats would come and tow him off, and despatched a lieutenant to the *Confiance* to ascertain her state. The lieutenant returned with news of Captain Downie's death, while the British gunboats had been driven half a mile off; and, after having maintained the fight single-handed for fifteen minutes, until, from the number of shot between wind and water, the water had risen a foot above her lower deck, the plucky little brig hauled down her colors, and the fight ended, a little over two hours and a half

[1] Midshipman Lee, in his letter already quoted, says "not five men were left unhurt"; this would, of course, include bruises, etc., as hurts.

after the first gun had been fired. Not one of the larger vessels had a mast that would bear canvas, and the prizes were in a sinking condition. The British gallies drifted to leeward, none with their colors up; but as the *Saratoga's* boarding-officer passed along the deck of the *Confiance* he accidentally ran against a lock-string of one of her starboard guns,[1] and it went off. This was apparently understood as a signal by the gallies, and they moved slowly off, pulling but a very few sweeps, and not one of them hoisting an ensign.

On both sides the ships had been cut up in the most extraordinary manner; the *Saratoga* had 55 shot-holes in her hull, and the *Confiance* 105 in hers, and the *Eagle* and *Linnet* had suffered in proportion. The number of killed and wounded cannot be exactly stated; it was probably about 200 on the American side, and over 300 on the British.[2]

[1] A sufficient commentary, by the way, on James's assertion that the guns of the *Confiance* had to be fired by matches, as the gun-locks did not fit!

[2] Macdonough returned his loss as follows:

	Killed	Wounded
Saratoga	28	29
Eagle	13	20
Ticonderoga	6	6
Preble	2	
Boxer	3	1
Centipede		1
Wilmer		1

A total of 52 killed and 58 wounded; but the latter had

Captain Macdonough at once returned the British officers their swords. Captain Pring writes: "I have much satisfaction in making you acquainted with the humane treatment the wounded have received from Commodore Macdonough; they were immediately removed to his own hospital on Crab Island, and furnished with every requisite. His generous and polite attention to myself, the officers, and men, will ever hereafter be gratefully remembered." The effects

apparently only included those who had to go to the hospital. Probably about 90 additional were more or less slightly wounded. Captain Pring, in his letter of September 12th, says the *Confiance* had 41 killed and 40 wounded; the *Linnet*, 10 killed and 14 wounded; the *Chubb*, 6 killed and 16 wounded; the *Finch*, 2 wounded: in all, 57 killed and 72 wounded. But he adds "that no opportunity has offered to muster . . . this is the whole as yet ascertained to be killed or wounded." The Americans took out 180 dead and wounded from the *Confiance*, 50 from the *Linnet*, and 40 from the *Chubb* and *Finch;* in all, 270. James (*Naval Occurrences*, p. 412) says the *Confiance* had 83 wounded. As Captain Pring wrote his letter in Plattsburg Bay the day after the action, he of course could not give the loss aboard the British gunboats; so James at once assumed that they suffered none. As well as could be found out, they had between 50 and 100 killed and wounded. The total British loss was between 300 and 400, as nearly as can be ascertained. For this action, as already shown, James is of no use whatever. Compare his statements, for example, with those of Midshipman Lee, in the *Naval Chronicle*. The comparative loss, as a means of testing the competitive prowess of the combatants, is not of much consequence in this case, as the weaker party in point of force conquered.

of the victory were immediate and of the highest importance. Sir George Prevost and his army at once fled in great haste and confusion back to Canada, leaving our northern frontier clear for the remainder of the war; while the victory had a very great effect on the negotiations for peace.

In this battle the crews on both sides behaved with equal bravery, and left nothing to be desired in this respect; but from their rawness they of course showed far less skill than the crews of most of the American and some of the British ocean cruisers, such as the *Constitution*, *United States*, or *Shannon*, the *Hornet*, *Wasp*, or *Reindeer*. Lieutenant Cassin handled the *Ticonderoga*, and Captain Pring the *Linnet*, with the utmost gallantry and skill, and, after Macdonough, they divided the honors of the day. But Macdonough in this battle won a higher fame than any other commander of the war, British or American. He had a decidedly superior force to contend against, the officers and men of the two sides being about on a par in every respect; and it was solely owing to his foresight and resource that we won the victory. He forced the British to engage at a disadvantage by his excellent choice of position; and he prepared beforehand for every possible contingency. His personal prowess had already been shown at the cost of the rovers of Tripoli, and in this action he helped fight the guns as ably as

the best sailor. His skill, seamanship, quick eye, readiness of resource, and indomitable pluck, are beyond all praise. Down to the time of the Civil War, he is the greatest figure in our naval history. A thoroughly religious man, he was as generous and humane as he was skilful and brave; one of the greatest of our sea-captains, he has left a stainless name behind him.

BRITISH LOSS

Name	Tons	Guns	Remarks
Brig.....	100	10	Burnt by Lieut. Gregory.
Magnet.....	187	12	Burnt by her crew.
Black Snake.....	30	1	Captured.
Gunboat.....	50	2	"
"	50	3	"
Confiance.....	1200	37	"
Linnet.....	350	16	"
Chubb.....	112	11	"
Finch.....	110	11	"
9 vessels	2189	103	

AMERICAN LOSS

Name	Tons	Guns	Remarks
Growler.....	81	7	Captured.
Boat.....	50	2	"
Tigress.....	96	1	"
Scorpion.....	86	2	"
Ohio.....	94	1	"
Somers.....	98	2	"
6 vessels	505	15	

CHAPTER III

1815

CONCLUDING OPERATIONS

President captured by Captain Hayes's squadron—Successful cutting-out expeditions of the Americans—Privateer brig *Chasseur* captures *St. Lawrence* schooner—*Constitution* captures *Cyane* and *Levant*—Escapes from a British squadron—The *Hornet* captures the *Penguin*, and escapes from a 74—The *Peacock* and the *Nautilus*—Summary—Remarks on the war—Tables of comparative loss, etc.—Compared with results of Anglo-French struggle.

THE treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain was signed at Ghent, December 24, 1814, and ratified at Washington, February 18, 1815. But during these first two months of 1815, and until the news reached the cruisers on the ocean, the warfare went on with much the same characteristics as before. The blockading squadrons continued standing on and off before the ports containing warships with the same unwearying vigilance; but the ice and cold prevented any attempts at harrying the coast except by the few frigates scattered along the shores of the Carolinas and Georgia. There was no longer any formidable British fleet

in the Chesapeake or Delaware, while at New Orleans the only available naval force of the Americans consisted of a few small row-boats, with which they harassed the rear of the retreating British. The *Constitution*, Captain Stewart, was already at sea, having put out from Boston on the 17th of December, while the blockading squadron (composed of the same three frigates she subsequently encountered) was temporarily absent.

The *Hornet*, Captain Biddle, had left the port of New London, running in heavy weather through the blockading squadron, and had gone into New York, where the *President*, Commodore Decatur, and *Peacock*, Captain Warrington, with the *Tom Bowline*, brig, were already assembled, intending to start on a cruise for the East Indies. The blockading squadron off the port consisted of the 56-gun razee *Majestic*, Captain Hayes; 24-pounder frigate *Endymion*, Captain Hope; 18-pounder frigate *Pomone*, Captain Lumly; and 18-pounder frigate *Tenedos*, Captain Parker.[1] On the 14th of January, a severe snow-storm came on and blew the squadron off the coast. Next day it moderated, and the ships stood off to the north-west to get into the track which they supposed the Americans would take if they attempted to put out in the storm. Singularly enough, at the instant of arriving at the intended point, an hour

[1] Letter of Rear-Admiral Hotham, January 23, 1815.

before daylight on the 15th, Sandy Hook bearing W.N.W. 15 leagues, a ship was made out on the *Majestic's* weather-bow, standing S.E.[1] This ship was the unlucky *President*. On the evening of the 14th she had left her consorts at anchor, and put out to sea in a gale. But by a mistake of the pilots, who were to place boats to beacon the passage, the frigate struck on the bar, where she beat heavily for an hour and a half,[2] springing her masts and becoming very much hogged and twisted.[3] Owing to the severity of her injuries, the *President* would have put back to port, but was prevented by the westerly gale.[4] Accordingly, Decatur steered at first along Long Island then shaped his course to the S.E., and in the dark ran into the British squadron, which, but for his unfortunate accident, he would have escaped. At daylight, the *President*, which had hauled up and passed to the northward of her opponents,[5] found herself with the *Majestic* and *Endymion* astern, the *Pomone* on the port, and the *Tenedos* on the starboard quarter.[6] The chase now became very interesting.[7] During the early part of the day, while the wind was still strong, the *Majestic* led the *Endymion* and fired occasion-

[1] Letter of Captain Hayes, January 17, 1815.
[2] Letter of Commodore Decatur, January 18, 1815.
[3] Report of Court-martial, Alex. Murray presiding, April 20, 1815. [4] Decatur's letter, January 18th. [5] *Ibid.*
[6] James, vi., 529. [7] Letter of Captain Hayes.

ally at the *President*, but without effect.[1] The *Pomone* gained faster than the others, but by Captain Hayes's orders was signalled to go in chase of the *Tenedos*, whose character the captain could not make out[2]; and this delayed her several hours in the chase.[3] In the afternoon, the wind coming out light and baffling, the *Endymion* left the *Majestic* behind,[4] and, owing to the *President's* disabled state and the amount of water she made in consequence of the injuries received while on the bar, gained rapidly on her,[5] although she lightened ship and did everything else that was possible to improve her sailing.[6] But a shift of wind helped the *Endymion*,[7] and the latter was able, at about 2.30, to begin skirmishing with her bow-chasers, answered by the stern-chasers of the *President*.[8] At 5.30, the *Endymion* began close action,[9] within half point-blank shot on the *President's* starboard quarter,[10] where not a gun of the latter could bear.[11] The *President* continued in the same course, steering east by north, the wind being northwest, expecting the *Endymion* soon to come up abeam; but the latter warily kept her

[1] Letter of Commodore Decatur. [2] James, vi., 529.
[3] Log of *Pomone*, published at Bermuda, January 29th, and quoted in full in the *Naval Chronicle*, xxxiii., 370.
[4] Letter of Captain Hayes. [5] Letter of Decatur.
[6] *Ibid.* [7] Cooper, ii., 466. [8] Log of *Pomone*.
[9] Letter of Captain Hayes. [10] James, vi., 5.30.
[11] Letter of Decatur.

position by yawing, so as not to close.[1] So things continued for half an hour, during which the *President* suffered more than during all the remainder of the combat.[2] At 6.00, the *President* kept off, heading to the south, and the two adversaries ran abreast, the Americans using the starboard and the British the port batteries.[3] Decatur tried to close with his antagonist, but whenever he hauled nearer to the latter she hauled off [4] and, being the swiftest ship, could of course evade him; so he was reduced to the necessity of trying to throw her out of the combat [5] by dismantling her. He was completely successful in this, and after two hours' fighting the *Endymion's* sails were all cut from her yards [6] and she dropped astern, the last shot being fired from the *President*.[7] The *Endymion* was now completely silent,[8] and Commodore Decatur did not board her merely because her consorts were too close astern [9]; accordingly, the *President* hauled up again to try her chances at running, having even her royal studding-sails set,[10] and exposed her stern to the broadside of the *Endymion*,[11] but the latter did not fire a single gun.[12] Three hours

[1] Letter of Decatur. [2] Cooper, 470.
[3] Log of *Pomone*. [4] Report of Court-martial.
[5] Letter of Commodore Decatur.
[6] Letter of Captain Hayes. [7] Log of *Pomone*.
[8] *Ibid.* [9] Report of Court-martial. [10] James, vi., 538.
[11] Letter of Commodore Decatur. [12] Log of *Pomone*.

The President Dismounting the Endymion

afterward, at 11,[1] the *Pomone* caught up with the *President*, and, luffing to port, gave her the starboard broadside[2]; the *Tenedos* being two cable lengths' distance astern, taking up a raking position.[3] The *Pomone* poured in another broadside, within musket-shot,[4] when the *President* surrendered and was taken possession of by Captain Parker, of the *Tenedos*.[5] A considerable number of the *President's* people were killed by these last two broadsides.[6] The *Endymion* was at this time out of sight astern.[7] She did not come up, according to one account, for an hour and three quarters,[8] and according to another, for three hours[9]; and as she was a faster ship than the *President*, this means that she was at least two hours motionless, repairing damages. Commodore Decatur delivered his sword to Captain Hayes, of the *Majestic*, who returned it, stating in his letter that both sides had fought with great gallantry.[10] The *President* having been taken by an entire squadron,[11] the prize-money was divided

[1] Letter of Captain Hayes. [2] Log of *Pomone*.
[3] Decatur's letter. [4] Log of *Pomone*.
[5] James, vi., 531.
[6] Letter of Commodore Decatur, March 6, 1815; deposition of Chaplain Henry Robinson before Admiralty Court at St. George's, Bermuda, January, 1815.
[7] Letter of Decatur, January 18th. [8] Log of *Pomone*.
[9] Letter of Decatur, March 6th.
[10] Letter of Captain Hayes.
[11] Admiral Hotham's letter, January 23d.

equally among the ships.[1] The *President's* crew, all told, consisted of 450 men,[2] none of whom were British.[3] She had thus a hundred more men than her antagonist and threw about 100 pounds more shot at a broadside; but these advantages were more than counterbalanced by the injuries received on the bar, and by the fact that her powder was so bad that while some of the British shot went through both her sides, such a thing did not once happen to the *Endymion*,[4] when fairly hulled. The *President* lost 24 killed and 55 wounded[5]; the *Endymion*, 11 killed and 14 wounded.[6] Two days afterward, on their way to the Bermudas, a violent easterly gale came on, during which both ships were dismasted, and the *Endymion* in addition had to throw over all her spar-deck guns.[7]

As can be seen, almost every sentence of this account is taken (very nearly word for word) from the various official reports, relying especially on the log of the British frigate *Pomone*. I have been thus careful to have every point of the narrative established by unimpeachable reference: first, because there have been quite a number of British

[1] Bermuda *Royal Gazette*, March 8, 1815.
[2] Depositions of Lieutenant Gallagher and the other officers.
[3] Deposition of Commodore Decatur.
[4] Bermuda *Royal Gazette*, January 6, 1818.
[5] Decatur's letter.
[6] Letter of Captain Hope, January 15, 1815.
[7] James, vi., 534.

historians who have treated the conflict as if it were a victory and not a defeat for the *Endymion;* and in the second place, because I regret to say that I do not think that the facts bear out the assertions, on the part of most American authors, that Commodore Decatur "covered himself with glory" and showed the "utmost heroism." As regards the first point, Captain Hope himself, in his singularly short official letter, does little beyond detail his own loss, and makes no claim to having vanquished his opponent. Almost all the talk about its being a "victory" comes from James; and in recounting this, as well as all the other battles, nearly every subsequent British historian simply gives James's statements over again, occasionally amplifying, but more often altering or omitting, the vituperation. The point at issue is simply this: Could a frigate which, according to James himself, went out of action with every sail set, take another frigate which, for two hours, according to the log of the *Pomone*, lay motionless and unmanageable on the waters, without a sail? To prove that it could not, of course, needs some not overscrupulous manipulation of the facts. The intention with which James sets about his work can be gathered from the triumphant conclusion he comes to, that Decatur's name has been "sunk quite as low as that of Bainbridge or Porter," which, comparing

small things to great, is somewhat like saying that Napoleon's defeat by Wellington and Blucher "sunk" him to the level of Hannibal. For the account of the American crew and loss, James relies on the statements made in the Bermuda papers, of whose subsequent forced retraction he takes no notice, and of course largely overestimates both. On the same authority, he states that the *President's* fire was "silenced," Commodore Decatur stating the exact reverse. The point is fortunately settled by the log of the *Pomone*, which distinctly says that the last shot was fired by the *President*. His last resort is to state that the loss of the *President* was fourfold (in reality threefold) that of the *Endymion*. Now we have seen that the *President* lost "a considerable number" of men from the fire of the *Pomone*. Estimating these at only nineteen, we have a loss of sixty caused by the *Endymion*, and as most of this was caused during the first half hour, when the *President* was not firing, it follows that while the two vessels were *both* fighting, broadside and broadside, the loss inflicted was about equal; or, the *President*, aiming at her adversary's rigging, succeeded in completely disabling her, and incidentally killed twenty-five men, while the *Endymion* did not hurt the *President's* rigging at all, and, aiming at her hull, where, of course, the slaughter *ought* to have been far greater than

when the fire was directed aloft, only killed about the same number of men. Had there been no other vessels in chase, Commodore Decatur, his adversary having been thus rendered perfectly helpless, could have simply taken any position he chose and compelled the latter to strike, without suffering any material additional loss himself. As in such a case he would neither have endured the unanswered fire of the *Endymion* on his quarter for the first half hour, nor the subsequent broadsides of the *Pomone*, the *President's* loss would probably have been no greater than that of the *Constitution* in taking the *Java*. It is difficult to see how any outsider with an ounce of common sense and fair-mindedness can help awarding the palm to Decatur, as regards the action with the *Endymion*. But I regret to say that I must agree with James that he acted rather tamely, certainly not heroically, in striking to the *Pomone*. There was, of course, not much chance of success in doing battle with two fresh frigates; but then they only mounted eighteen-pounders, and, judging from the slight results of the cannonading from the *Endymion* and the first two (usually the most fatal) broadsides of the *Pomone*, it would have been rather a long time before they would have caused much damage. Meanwhile, the *President* was pretty nearly as well off as ever as far as fighting and sailing went. A lucky shot might

have disabled one of her opponents, and then the other would, in all probability, have undergone the same fate as the *Endymion*. At least it was well worth trying, and though Decatur could not be said to be disgraced, yet it is excusable to wish that Porter or Perry had been in his place. It is not very pleasant to criticise the actions of an American whose name is better known than that of almost any other single-ship captain of his time; but if a man is as much to be praised for doing fairly, or even badly, as for doing excellently, then there is no use in bestowing praise at all.

This is perhaps as good a place as any other to notice one or two of James's most common misstatements; they really would not need refutation were it not that they had been re-echoed, as usual, by almost every British historian of the war for the last sixty years. In the first place, James puts the number of the *President's* men at 475; she had 450. An exactly parallel reduction must often be made when he speaks of the force of an American ship. Then he says there were many British among them, which is denied under oath by the American officers; this holds good, also, for the other American frigates. He says there were but four boys; there were nearly thirty; and on p. 120 he says the youngest was fourteen, whereas we incidentally learn from the *Life of Decatur* that several were under twelve. A favorite

accusation is that the American midshipmen were chiefly masters and mates of merchantmen; but this was hardly ever the case. Many of the midshipmen of the war afterward became celebrated commanders, and most of these (a notable instance being Farragut, the greatest admiral since Nelson) were entirely too young in 1812 to have had vessels under them, and, moreover, came largely from the so-called "best families."

Again, in the first two frigate actions of 1812, the proportion of killed to wounded happened to be unusually large on board the American frigates; accordingly, James states (p. 146) that the returns of the wounded had been garbled, underestimated, and made "subservient to the views of the commanders and their government." To support his position that Captain Hull, who reported seven killed and seven wounded, had not given the list of the latter in full, he says that "an equal number of killed and wounded, as given in the American account, hardly ever occurs, except in cases of explosion"; and yet, on p. 519, he gives the loss of the British *Hermes* as 25 killed and 24 wounded, disregarding the incongruity involved. On p. 169, in noticing the loss of the *United States*, five killed and seven wounded, he says that "the slightly wounded as in all other American cases, are omitted." This is untrue, and the proportion on the *United States*, 5 to 7, is just about

the same as that given by James himself on the *Endymion*, 11 to 14, and *Nautilus*, 6 to 8. In supporting this theory, James brings up all the instances where the American wounded bore a larger proportion to their dead than on board the British ships, but passes over the actions with the *Reindeer*, *Epervier*, *Penguin*, *Endymion*, and *Boxer*, where the reverse was the case. One of James's most common methods of attempting to throw discredit on the much vilified "Yankees" is by quoting newspaper accounts of their wounded. Thus he says (p. 562) of the *Hornet*, that several of her men told some of the *Penguin's* sailors that she lost 10 men killed, 16 wounded, etc. Utterly false rumors of this kind were as often indulged in by the Americans as the British. After the capture of the *President*, articles occasionally appeared in the papers to the effect that some American sailor had counted "23 dead" on board the *Endymion*, that "more than 50" of her men were wounded, etc. Such statements were as commonly made and with as little foundation by one side as by the other, and it is absurd for a historian to take any notice of them. James does no worse than many of our own writers of the same date; but while their writings have passed into oblivion, his work is still often accepted as a standard. This must be my apology for devoting so much time to it. The severest criticism to

which it can possibly be subjected is to compare it with the truth. Whenever dealing with purely American affairs, James's history is as utterly untrustworthy as its contemporary, Niles's *Register*, is in matters purely British, while both are invaluable in dealing with things relating strictly to their own nation; they supplement each other.

On January 8th, General Packenham was defeated and killed by General Jackson at New Orleans, the *Louisiana* and the seamen of the *Carolina* having their full share in the glory of the day, and Captain Henly being among the very few American wounded. On the same day, Sailing-master Johnson, with 28 men in two boats, cut out the British armed transport brig *Cyprus*, containing provisions and munitions of war, and manned by ten men.[1] On the 18th, the British abandoned the enterprise and retreated to their ships; and Mr. Thomas Shields, a purser, formerly a sea-officer, set off to harass them while embarking. At sunset, on the 20th, he left with five boats and a gig, manned in all with 53 men, and having under him Sailing-master Daily and Master's-mate Boyd.[2] At 10 o'clock P.M., a large barge, containing 14 seamen and 40 officers and

[1] Letter of Sailing-master Johnson, January 9, 1815.

[2] Letter of Thomas Shields to Com. Patterson, January 25, 1815.

men of the 14th Light Dragoons, was surprised and carried by boarding, after a slight struggle. The prisoners outnumbering their captors, the latter returned to shore, left them in a place of safety, and again started at 2 A.M. on the morning of the 22d. Numerous transports and barges of the enemy could be seen, observing very little order and apparently taking no precautions against attack, which they probably did not apprehend. One of the American boats captured a transport and five men; another, containing Mr. Shields himself and eight men, carried by boarding, after a short resistance, a schooner carrying ten men. The flotilla then reunited and captured, in succession, with no resistance, five barges containing 70 men. By this time the alarm had spread and they were attacked by six boats, but these were repelled with some loss. Seven of the prisoners (who were now half as many again as their captors) succeeded in escaping in the smallest prize. Mr. Shields returned with the others, 78 in number. During the entire expedition he had lost but three men, wounded; he had taken 132 prisoners, and destroyed eight craft, whose aggregate tonnage about equalled that of the five gunvessels taken on Lake Borgne.

On January 30, 1815, information was received by Captain Dent, commanding at North Edisto, Ga., that a party of British officers and men, in

four boats belonging to H. M. S. *Hebrus*, Captain Palmer, were watering at one of the adjacent islands.[1] Lieutenant Lawrence Kearney, with three barges containing about 75 men, at once proceeded outside to cut them off, when the militia drove them away. The frigate was at anchor out of gunshot, but as soon as she perceived the barges began firing guns as signals. The British on shore left in such a hurry that they deserted their launch, which, containing a 12-pound boat carronade and six swivels, was taken by the Americans. The other boats—two cutters, and a large tender mounting one long 9 and carrying 30 men—made for the frigate; but Lieutenant Kearney laid the tender aboard and captured her after a sharp brush. The cutters were only saved by the fire of the *Hebrus*, which was very well directed—one of her shot taking off the head of a man close by Lieutenant Kearney. The frigate got under way and intercepted Kearney's return, but the Lieutenant then made for South Edisto, whither he carried his prize in triumph. This was one of the most daring exploits of the war, and was achieved at very small cost. On February 14th, a similar feat was performed. Lieutenant Kearney had manned the

[1] Letter of Lawrence Kearney of January 30, 1815 (see in the Archives at Washington, *Captains' Letters*, vol. xlii., No. 100).

captured launch with 25 men and the 12-pound carronade. News was received of another harrying expedition undertaken by the British, and Captain Dent, with seven boats, put out to attack them, but was unable to cross the reef. Meanwhile, Kearney's barge had gotten outside, and attacked the schooner *Brant*, a tender to H. M. S *Severn*, mounting an 18-pounder, and with a crew of two midshipmen and twenty-one marines and seamen. A running fight began, the *Brant* evidently fearing that the other boats might get across the reef and join in the attack; suddenly she ran aground on a sand-bank, which accident totally demoralized her crew. Eight of them escaped, in her boat, to the frigate; the remaining fifteen, after firing a few shot, surrendered and were taken possession of.[1]

I have had occasion from time to time to speak of cutting-out expeditions, successful and otherwise, undertaken by British boats against American privateers; and twice a small British national cutter was captured by an overwhelmingly su-

[1] Letter of Captain Dent, February 16th (in *Captains' Letters*, vol. xlii., No. 130). Most American authors, headed by Cooper, give this exploit a more vivid coloring by increasing the crew of the *Brant* to forty men, omitting to mention that she was hard and fast aground, and making no allusion to the presence of the five other American boats, which undoubtedly caused the *Brant's* flight in the first place.

perior American opponent of this class. We now, for the only time, come across an engagement between a privateer and a regular cruiser of approximately equal force. These privateers came from many different ports and varied greatly in size. Baltimore produced the largest number; but New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Salem were not far behind; and Charleston, Bristol, and Plymouth supplied some that were very famous. Many were merely small pilot-boats with a crew of 20 to 40 men, intended only to harry the West Indian trade. Others were large, powerful craft, unequalled for speed by any vessels of their size, which penetrated to the remotest corners of the ocean, from Man to the Spice Islands. When a privateer started she was overloaded with men, to enable her to man her prizes; a successful cruise would reduce her crew to a fifth of its original size. The favorite rig was that of a schooner, but there were many brigs and brigantines. Each was generally armed with a long 24 or 32 on a pivot, and a number of light guns in broadside, either long 9's or short 18's or 12's. Some had no pivot gun, others had nothing else. The largest of them carried seventeen guns (a pivotal 32 and sixteen long 12's in broadside) with a crew of 150. Such a vessel ought to have been a match, at her own distance, for a British brig-sloop, but we never hear of any such engagements, and there

were several instances where privateers gave up, without firing a shot, to a force superior, it is true, but not enough so to justify the absolute tameness of the surrender.[1] One explanation of this was that they were cruising as private ventures, and their object was purely to capture merchantmen with as little risk as possible to themselves. Another reason was that they formed a kind of sea-militia, and, like their compeers on land, some *could* fight as well as any regulars, while most would *not* fight at all, especially if there was need of concerted action between two or three. The American papers of the day are full of "glorious victories" gained by privateers over packets and Indiamen; the British papers are almost as full of instances where the packets and Indiamen "heroically repulsed" the privateers. As neither side ever chronicles a defeat, and as the narration is apt to be decidedly figurative in character, there is very little hope of getting at the truth of such meetings; so I have confined myself to the mention of those cases where privateers, of either side, came into armed collision with regular cruisers. We are then sure to find some authentic account.

The privateer brig *Chasseur*, of Baltimore, Cap-

[1] As when the *Epervier*, some little time before her own capture, took without resistance the *Alfred*, of Salem, mounting 16 long nines and having 108 men aboard.

tain Thomas Boyle, carried sixteen long 12's, and had, when she left port, 115 men aboard. She made eighteen prizes on her last voyage, and her crew was thus reduced to less than 80 men; she was then chased by the *Barossa*, frigate, and threw overboard ten of her long 12's. Afterward, eight 9-pound carronades were taken from a prize, to partially supply the places of the lost guns; but as she had no shot of the calibre of these carronades, each of the latter was loaded with one 4-pound and one 6-pound ball, giving her a broadside of 76 lbs. On the 26th of February, two leagues from Havana, the *Chasseur* fell in with the British schooner *St. Lawrence*, Lieut. H. C. Gordon, mounting twelve 12-pound carronades, and one long 9; her broadside was thus 81 lbs., and she had between 60 and 80 men aboard.[1] The *Chasseur* mistook the *St. Lawrence* for a merchantman and closed with her. The mistake was discovered too late to escape, even had such been

[1] Letter of Captain Thomas Boyle, of March 2, 1815 (see Niles and Coggeshall); he says the schooner had two more carronades; I have taken the number given by James (p. 539). Captain Boyle says the *St. Lawrence* had on board 89 men and several more, including a number of soldiers and marines and gentlemen of the navy, as passengers; James says her crew amounted to 51 "exclusive of some passengers," which I suppose must mean at least nine men. So the forces were pretty equal; the *Chasseur* may have had 20 men more or less than her antagonist, and she threw from 5 to 21 lbs. less weight of shot.

Captain Boyle's intention, and a brief but bloody action ensued. At 1.26 P.M., the *St. Lawrence* fired the first broadside, within pistol-shot, to which the *Chasseur* replied with her great guns and musketry. The brig then tried to close, so as to board; but having too much way on, shot ahead under the lee of the schooner, which put her helm up to wear under the *Chasseur's* stern. Boyle, however, followed his antagonist's manœuvre, and the two vessels ran along side by side, the *St. Lawrence* drawing ahead, while the firing was very heavy. Then Captain Boyle put his helm a-starboard and ran his foe aboard, when, in the act of boarding, her colors were struck at 1.41 P.M., fifteen minutes after the first shot. Of the *Chasseur's* crew 5 were killed and 8 wounded, including Captain Boyle slightly. Of the *St. Lawrence's* crew 6 were killed and 17 (according to James, 18) wounded. This was a very creditable action. The *St. Lawrence* had herself been an American privateer, called the *Atlas*, and was of 241 tons, or just 36 less than the *Chasseur*. The latter could thus fairly claim that her victory was gained over a regular cruiser of about her own force. Captain Southcomb of the *Lottery*, Captain Reid of the *General Armstrong*, Captain Ordronaux of the *Neufchâtel*, and Captain Boyle of the *Chasseur* deserve as much credit as any regularly commissioned sea-officers. But it is a mistake to

consider these cases as representing the *average;* an ordinary privateer was, naturally enough, no match for a British regular cruiser of equal force. The privateers were of incalculable benefit to us, and inflicted enormous damage on the foe; but in fighting they suffered under the same disadvantages as other irregular forces; they were utterly unreliable. A really brilliant victory would be followed by a most extraordinary defeat.

After the *Constitution* had escaped from Boston, as I have described, she ran to the Bermudas, cruised in their vicinity a short while, thence to Madeira, to the Bay of Biscay, and finally off Portugal, cruising for some time in sight of the Rock of Lisbon. Captain Stewart then ran off southwest, and on February 20th, Madeira bearing W.S.W. 60 leagues,[1] the day being cloudy, with a light easterly breeze,[2] at 1 P.M. a sail was made two points on the port bow; and at 2 P.M., Captain Stewart, hauling up in chase, discovered another sail. The first of these was the frigate-built ship corvette *Cyane*, Captain Gordon Thomas Falcon, and the second was the ship-sloop *Levant*, Captain the Honorable George Douglass.[3] Both were

[1] Letter of Captain Stewart to the Secretary of the Navy, May 20, 1815.

[2] Log of *Constitution*, February 20, 1815.

[3] *Naval Chronicle*, xxxiii., 466.

standing close-hauled on the starboard tack, the sloop about ten miles to leeward of the corvette. At 4 P.M. the latter began making signals to her consort that the strange sail was an enemy, and then made all sail before the wind to join the sloop. The *Constitution* bore up in chase, setting her topmast, topgallant, and royal studding-sails. In half an hour she carried away her main royal mast, but immediately got another prepared, and at 5 o'clock began firing at the corvette with the two port-bow guns; as the shot fell short the firing soon ceased. At 5.30, the *Cyane* got within hail of the *Levant*, and the latter's gallant commander expressed to Captain Falcon his intention of engaging the American frigate. The two ships accordingly hauled up their courses and stood on the starboard tack; but immediately afterward their respective captains concluded to try to delay the action till dark, so as to get the advantage of manœuvring.[1] Accordingly they again set all sail and hauled close to the wind to endeavor to weather their opponent; but, finding the latter coming down too fast for them to succeed, they again stripped to fighting canvas and formed on the starboard tack in head and stern line, the *Levant* about a cable's length in front of her consort. The American now had them completely under her guns and showed her ensign, to

[1] *Naval Chronicle*, xxxiii., 466.

which challenge the British ships replied by setting their colors. At 6.10, the *Constitution* ranged up to windward of the *Cyane* and *Levant*, the former on her port quarter the latter on her port bow, both being distant about 250 yards from her[1]—so close that the American marines were constantly engaged almost from the beginning of the action. The fight began at once, and continued with great spirit for a quarter of an hour, the vessels all firing broadsides. It was now moonlight, and an immense column of smoke formed under the lee of the *Constitution*, shrouding from sight her foes; and, as the fire of the latter had almost ceased, Captain Stewart also ordered his men to stop, so as to find out the positions of the ships. In about three minutes the smoke cleared, disclosing to the Americans the *Levant* dead to leeward on the port beam, and the *Cyane* luffing up for their port quarter. Giving a broadside to the sloop, Stewart braced aback his main- and mizzen-topsails, with topgallant sails set, shook all forward, and backed rapidly astern, under cover of the smoke, abreast

[1] Testimony sworn to by Lieut. W. B. Shubrick and Lieutenant-of-Marines Archibald Henderson before Thomas Welsh, Jr., Justice of the Peace, Suffolk Street, Boston, July 20, 1815. The depositions were taken in consequence of a report started by some of the British journals that the action began at a distance of three quarters of a mile. All the American depositions were that all three ships began firing at once, when equidistant from each other about 250 yards, the marines being engaged almost the whole time.

[illegible] the latter to fill again to [illegible] The [illegible] was [illegible] for a [illegible] almost died away. [illegible] and assist her [illegible] filled her topsails, [illegible] stern rakes, [illegible] to get out of the [illegible] was [illegible] discovered wearing, [illegible] at once wore and [illegible] the former luffing to [illegible] into the starboard [illegible] as the latter ranged [illegible] struck at 9.50, just [illegible] after the beginning of the action. [illegible] taken possession of, and Lieutenant [illegible] second of the [illegible], was put in command [illegible] manned the prize. Captain [illegible] at 8 o'clock filled away after her consort. [illegible] had only gone out of the [illegible] Captain Douglass had no idea of retreat, and no sooner had he rove new braces than he [illegible] up to the wind, and came very gallantly back to find out his friend's condition. At 8.30, he met the *Constitution*, and, failing to weather her, the frigate and sloop passed each other on opposite tacks, exchanging broadsides. Finding her antagonist too heavy, the *Levant* then crowded all sail to escape, but was soon overtaken by the *Constitution*, and at about 9.30 the latter

opened with her starboard bow-chasers, and soon afterward the British captain hauled down his colors. Mr. Ballard, first of the *Constitution*, was afterward put in command of the prize. By one o'clock, the ships were all in order again.

The *Constitution* had been hulled eleven times, more often than in either of her previous actions, but her loss was mainly due to the grape and musketry of the foe in the beginning of the fight.[1] The British certainly fired better than usual, especially considering the fact that there was much manœuvring, and that it was a night action. The Americans lost 3 men killed, 3 mortally and 9 severely and slightly wounded. The corvette, out of her crew of 180, had 12 men killed and 26 wounded, several mortally; the sloop, out of 140, had 7 killed and 16 wounded. The *Constitution* had started on her cruise very full-handed, with over 470 men, but several being absent on a prize, she went into battle with about 450.[2] The prizes had suffered a good deal in their hulls and rigging, and had received some severe wounds in their masts and principal spars. The *Cyane* carried on her main-deck twenty-two 32-pound carronades, and on her spar-deck two long 12's and ten 18-

[1] Deposition of her officers, as before cited.

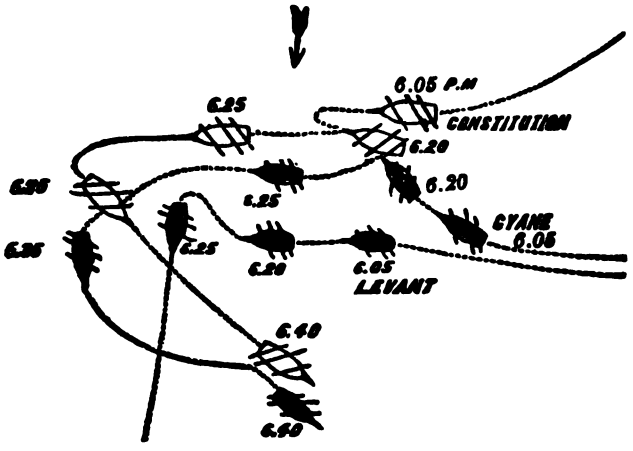
[2] Four hundred and ten officers and seamen, and 41 marines, by her muster-roll of February 19th. (The muster-rolls are preserved in the Treasury Department at Washington.)

pounder carronades. The *Levant* carried, all on one deck, eighteen 32-pound carronades and two long 9's, together with a shifting 12-pounder. Thus, their broadside weight of metal was 763 pounds, with a total of 320 men, of whom 61 fell, against the *Constitution's* 704 pounds and 450 men, of whom 15 were lost; or, nominally, the relative force was 100 to 91, and the relative loss 100 to 24. But the British guns were almost exclusively carronades, which, as already pointed out in the case of the *Essex*, and in the battle off Plattsburg, are no match for long guns. Moreover, the scantling of the smaller ships was, of course, by no means as stout as that of the frigate, so that the disparity of force was much greater than the figures would indicate, although not enough to account for the difference in loss. Both the British ships were ably handled, their fire was well directed, and the *Levant* in especial was very gallantly fought.

As regards the *Constitution*, "her manœuvring was as brilliant as any recorded in naval annals," and it would have been simply impossible to surpass the consummate skill with which she was handled in the smoke, always keeping her antagonists to leeward, and, while raking both of them, not being once raked herself. The firing was excellent, considering the short time the ships were actually engaged, and the fact that it was at night.

Altogether, the fight reflected the greatest credit on her, and also on her adversaries.[1]

The merits of this action can perhaps be better appreciated by comparing it with a similar one that took place a few years before between a British sloop and corvette on the one side, and a French frigate on the other, and which is given in full by both James and Troude. Although these



authors differ somewhat in the account of it, both agree that the Frenchman, the *Nereide*, of 44 guns

[1] There is no British official account of the action. James states that the entire British force was only 302 men, of whom 12 were killed and 29 wounded. This is probably not based on any authority. Captain Stewart received on board 301 prisoners, of whom 42 were wounded, several mortally. Curiously enough, James also underestimates the American

on February 14, 1810, fought a long and indecisive battle with the *Rainbow* of 26 and *Avon* of 18 guns, the British sloops being fought separately, in succession. The relative force was almost exactly as in the *Constitution's* fight. Each side claimed that the other fled. But this much is sure: The *Constitution*, engaging the *Cyane* and *Levant* together, captured both; while the *Nereide*, engaging the *Rainbow* and *Avon* separately, captured neither.

The three ships now proceeded to the Cape de Verdes, and on March 10th anchored in the harbor of Porto Praya, Island of San Jago. Here a merchant-brig was taken as a cartel, and a hundred of the prisoners were landed to help fit her for sea. The next day the weather was thick and

loss, making it only 12. He also says that many attempts were made by the Americans to induce the captured British to desert, while the *Constitution's* officers deny this under oath, before Justice Welsh, as already quoted, and state that, on the contrary, many of the prisoners offered to enlist on the frigate, but were all refused permission—as "the loss of the *Chesapeake* had taught us the danger of having renegades aboard." This denial, by the way, holds good for all the similar statements made by James as regards the *Guerrière*, *Macedonian*, etc. He also states that a British court-martial found various counts against the Americans for harsh treatment, but all of these were specifically denied by the American officers, under oath, as already quoted.

I have relied chiefly on Captain Stewart's narrative, but partly (as to time, etc.) on the British account in the *Naval Chronicle*.

The Constitution Captures the Cyane and the Levant

foggy, with fresh breezes.[1] The first and second lieutenants, with a good part of the people, were aboard the two prizes. At five minutes past twelve, while Mr. Shubrick, the senior remaining lieutenant, was on the quarter-deck, the canvas of a large vessel suddenly loomed up through the haze, her hull being completely hidden by the fog-bank. Her character could not be made out; but she was sailing close-hauled, and evidently making for the roads. Mr. Shubrick at once went down and reported the stranger to Captain Stewart, when that officer coolly remarked that it was probably a British frigate or an Indiaman, and directed the lieutenant to return on deck, call all hands, and get ready to go out and attack her.[2] At that moment the canvas of two other ships was discovered rising out of the fog astern of the vessel first seen. It was now evident that all three were heavy frigates.[3] In fact they were the *Newcastle*, 50, Captain Lord George Stewart; *Leander*, 50, Captain Sir Ralph Collier, K. C. B.; and *Acasta*, 40, Captain Robert Kerr, standing into Porto Praya, close-hauled on the starboard tack, the wind being light northeast by north.[4] Captain Stewart at once saw that his

[1] Log of *Constitution*, March 11, 1815.
[2] Cooper, ii., 459.
[3] Letter of Lieutenant Hoffman, April 10, 1815.
[4] Marshall's *Naval Biography*, ii., 535.

opponents were far too heavy for a fair fight, and, knowing that the neutrality of the port would not be the slightest protection to him, he at once signalled to the prizes to follow, cut his cable, and, in less than ten minutes from the time the first frigate was seen, was standing out of the roads, followed by Hoffman and Ballard. Certainly a more satisfactory proof of the excellent training of both officers and men could hardly be given than the rapidity, skill, and perfect order with which everything was done. Any indecision on the part of the officers or bungling on the part of the men would have lost everything. The prisoners on shore had manned a battery and delivered a furious but ill-directed fire at their retreating conquerors. The frigate, sloop, and corvette, stood out of the harbor in the order indicated, on the port tack, passing close under the east point, and a gunshot to windward of the British squadron, according to the American, or about a league, according to the British, accounts. The Americans made out the force of the strangers correctly, and their own force was equally clearly discerned by the *Acasta;* but both the *Newcastle* and *Leander* mistook the *Cyane* and *Levant* for frigates, a mistake similar to that once made by Commodore Rodgers. The *Constitution* now crossed her topgallant yards and set the foresail, mainsail, spanker, flying jib, and topgallant-

sails; and the British ships, tacking, made all sail in pursuit. The *Newcastle* was on the *Constitution's* lee quarter and directly ahead of the *Leander*, while the *Acasta* was on the weather quarter of the *Newcastle*. All six ships were on the port tack. The *Constitution* cut adrift the boats towing astern, and her log notes that at 12.50 she found she was sailing about as fast as the ships on her lee quarter, but that the *Acasta* was luffing into her wake and dropping astern. The log of the *Acasta* says: "We had gained on the sloops, but the frigate had gained on us." At 1.10 the *Cyane* had fallen so far astern and to leeward that Captain Stewart signalled to Lieutenant Hoffman to tack, lest he should be cut off if he did not. Accordingly, the lieutenant put about and ran off toward the northwest, no notice being taken of him by the enemy beyond an ineffectual broadside from the sternmost frigate. At 2.35 he was out of sight of all the ships and shaped his course for America, which he reached on April 10th.[1] At 1.45, the *Newcastle* opened on the *Constitution*, firing by divisions, but the shot all fell short, according to the American statements, about 200 yards, while the British accounts (as given in Marshall's *Naval Biography*) make the distance much greater; at any rate, the vessels were so near that from the *Constitution* the officers of the *New-*

[1] Letter of Lieutenant Hoffman, April 10, 1815.

castle could be seen standing on the hammock nettings. But, very strangely, both the 50-gun ships apparently still mistook the *Levant*, though a low, flush-decked sloop like the *Hornet*, for the "*President*, *Congress*, or *Macedonian*," Captain Collier believing that the *Constitution* had sailed with two other frigates in company. By three o'clock, the[1] *Levant* had lagged so as to be in the same position from which the *Cyane* had just been rescued; accordingly, Captain Stewart signalled to her to tack, which she did, and immediately afterward all three British ships tacked in pursuit. Before they did so, it must be remembered the *Acasta* had weathered on the *Constitution*, though left considerably astern, while the *Newcastle* and *Leander* had about kept their positions on her lee or starboard quarter; so that if any ship had been detached after the *Levant* it should have been the *Leander*, which had least chance of overtaking the American frigate. The latter was by no means as heavily armed as either of the two 50's, and but little heavier than the *Acasta;* moreover, she was shorthanded, having manned her two prizes. The *Acasta*, at any rate, had made out the force of the *Levant*, and, even had she been a frigate, it was certainly carrying prudence to an extreme to make more than one ship tack after her. Had the *Newcastle* and *Acasta* kept on after the *Constitution*

[1] Marshall, ii., 533.

there was a fair chance of overtaking her, for the *Acasta* had weathered on her, and the chase could not bear up for fear of being cut off by the *Newcastle*. At any rate, the pursuit should not have been given up so early. Marshall says there was a mistake in the signalling. The British captains certainly bungled the affair; even James says (p. 558): "It is the most blundering piece of business recorded in these six volumes." As for Stewart and his men, they deserve the highest credit for the cool judgment and prompt, skilful seamanship they had displayed. The *Constitution*, having shaken off her pursuers, sailed to Maranham, where she landed her prisoners. At Porto Rico she learned of the peace, and forthwith made sail for New York, reaching it about the middle of May.

As soon as he saw Captain Stewart's signal, Lieutenant Ballard had tacked, and at once made for the anchorage at Porto Praya, which he reached, though pursued by all his foes, and anchored within 150 yards of a heavy battery.[1] The wisdom of Captain Stewart's course in not trusting to the neutrality of the port now became evident. The *Acasta* opened upon the sloop as soon as the latter had anchored, at 4.30.[2] The *Newcastle*, as soon as she arrived, also opened, and so

[1] Letter of Lieutenant Ballard, May 2, 1815.

[2] *Newcastle's* log, as given by Marshall and James.

did the *Leander*, while the British prisoners on shore fired the guns of the battery. Having borne this combined cannonade for fifteen minutes,[1] the colors of the *Levant* were hauled down. The unskilful firing of the British ships certainly did not redeem the blunders previously made by Sir George Collier, for the three heavy frigates during fifteen minutes' broadside practice in smooth water against a stationary and unresisting foe did her but little damage, and did not kill a man. The chief effect of the fire was to damage the houses of the Portuguese town.[2]

After the capture of the *President*, the *Peacock*, Captain Warrington, the *Hornet*, Captain Biddle, and *Tom Bowline*, brig, still remained in New York Harbor. On the 22d of January, a strong northwesterly gale began to blow, and the American vessels, according to their custom, at once prepared to take advantage of the heavy weather and run by the blockaders. They passed the bar by daylight, under storm canvas, the British frigates, lying to in the southeast, being plainly visible. They were ignorant of the fate of the *President*, and proceeded toward Tristan d'Acunha, which was the appointed rendezvous. A few days out, the *Hornet* parted company from the two others; these last reached Tristan d'Acunha about

[1] Ballard's letter. [2] James, vi., 551.

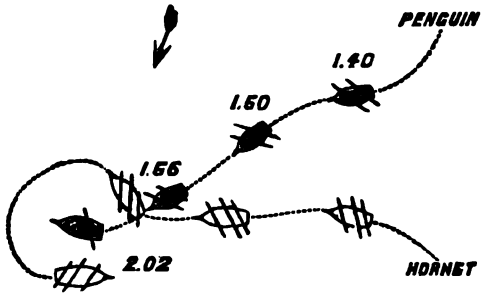
March 18th, but were driven off again by a gale. The *Hornet* reached the island on the 23d, and at half-past ten in the morning, the wind being fresh S.S.W., when about to anchor off the north point, a sail was made in the southeast, steering west.[1] This was the British brig-sloop *Penguin*, Captain James Dickenson. She was a new vessel, having left port for the first time in September, 1814. While at the Cape of Good Hope, she had received from Vice-Admiral Tyler 12 marines from the *Medway*, 74, increasing her complement to 132; and was then despatched on special service against a heavy American privateer, the *Young Wasp*, which had been causing great havoc among the homeward-bound Indiamen.

When the strange sail was first seen, Captain Biddle was just letting go his topsail sheets; he at once sheeted them home, and the stranger being almost instantly shut out by the land, he made all sail to the west, and again caught sight of her. Captain Dickenson now, for the first time, saw the American sloop, and at once bore up for her. The position of the two vessels was exactly the reverse of the *Wasp* and *Frolic*, the Englishman being to windward. The *Hornet* hove to, to let her antagonist close; then she filled her main-topsail and continued to yaw, wearing occasionally to prevent

[1] Letter from Captain Biddle to Commodore Decatur, March 25, 1815.

herself from being raked. At forty minutes past one, the *Penguin*, being within musket-shot, hauled to the wind on the starboard tack, hoisted a St. George's ensign and fired a gun. The *Hornet* luffed up on the same tack, hoisting American colors, and the action began with heavy broadsides. The vessels ran along thus for fifteen minutes, gradually coming closer together, and Captain Dickenson put his helm a-weather, to run his adversary aboard. At this moment the brave young officer received a mortal wound, and the command devolved on the first lieutenant, Mr. McDonald, who endeavored very gallantly to carry out his commander's intention, and at 1.56 the *Penguin's* bowsprit came in between the *Hornet's* main- and mizzen-rigging on the starboard side. The American seamen had been called away, and were at their posts to repel boarders, but as the British made no attempt to come on, the cutlass men began to clamber into the rigging to go aboard the brig. Captain Biddle very coolly stopped them, "it being evident from the beginning that our fire was greatly superior both in quickness and effect." There was a heavy sea running, and as the *Hornet* forged ahead, the *Penguin's* bowsprit carried away her mizzen shrouds, stern davits, and spanker-boom; and the brig then hung on her starboard quarter, where only small arms could be used on either side. An

English officer now called out something which Biddle understood, whether correctly or not is disputed, to be the word of surrender; accordingly, he directed his marines to cease firing, and jumped on the taffrail. At that minute two of the marines on the *Penguin's* forecastle, not thirty feet distant, fired at him, one of the balls inflicting a rather severe wound in his neck. A discharge of musketry from the *Hornet* at once killed both the marines,



and at that moment the ship drew ahead. As the vessels separated, the *Penguin's* foremast went overboard, the bowsprit breaking short off. The *Hornet* at once wore, to present a fresh broadside, while the *Penguin's* disabled condition prevented her following suit, and having lost a third of her men killed and wounded (14 of the former and 28 of the latter), her hull being riddled through and through, her foremast gone, mainmast tottering, and most of the guns on the engaged side dis-

mounted, she struck her colors at two minutes past two, twenty-two minutes after the first gun was fired. Of the *Hornet's* 150 men, 8 were absent in a prize. By actual measurement she was two feet longer and slightly narrower than her antagonist. Her loss was chiefly caused by musketry, amounting to 1 marine killed, 1 seaman mortally, Lieutenant Conner very severely, and Captain Biddle and 7 seamen slightly, wounded. Not a round shot struck the hull, nor was a mast or spar materially injured, but the rigging and sails were a good deal cut, especially about the fore- and main-topgallantmasts. The *Hornet's* crew had been suffering much from sickness, and 9 of the men were unable to be at quarters, thus reducing the vessels to an exact equality. Counting in these men, and excluding the 8 absent in a prize, we get as

COMPARATIVE FORCE

	Tonnage	No. Guns	Weight Metal	Crew	Loss
Hornet.....	480	10	279	142 [1]	11
Penguin.....	477	10	274	132	42

[1] This number of men is probably too great; I have not personally examined the *Hornet's* muster-roll for that period. Lieutenant Emmons, in his *History*, gives her 132 men; but perhaps he did not include the nine sick, which would make his statement about the same as mine. In response to my inquiries, I received a very kind letter from the Treasury Department (Fourth Auditor's office), which stated that the muster-roll of the *Hornet* on this voyage showed "101 officers and crew (marines excepted)". Adding the 20 marines,

Or, the force being practically equal, the *Hornet* inflicted fourfold the loss and tenfold the damage she suffered. Hardly any action of the war reflected greater credit on the United States marine than this—for the cool, skilful seamanship and excellent gunnery that enabled the Americans to destroy an antagonist of equal force in such an exceedingly short time. The British displayed equal bravery, but were certainly very much behind their antagonists in the other qualities which go to make up a first-rate man-of-war's man. Even James says he "cannot offer the trifling disparity of force in this action as an excuse for the *Penguin's* capture. The chief cause is . . . the immense disparity between the two vessels in . . . the effectiveness of their crews." [1]

would make but 121 in all. I think there must be some mistake in this, and so have considered the *Hornet's* crew as consisting, originally, of 150 men, the same as on her cruises in 1812.

The *Penguin* was in reality slightly larger than the *Hornet*, judging from the comparisons made in Biddle's letter (for the original of which see in the Naval Archives, *Captains' Letters*, vol. xlii., No. 112). He says that the *Penguin* though two feet shorter on deck than the *Hornet*, had a greater length of keel, a slightly greater breadth of beam, stouter sides, and higher bulwarks, with swivels on the capstan and tops, and that she fought both her "long 12's" on the same side. I have followed James, however, as regards this; he says her long guns were 6-pounders, and that but one was fought on a side.

[1] After the action but one official account, that of Captain

The *Penguin* was so cut up by shot that she had to be destroyed. After the stores, etc., had been taken out of her, she was thoroughly examined (Captain Biddle from curiosity taking her measurements in comparison with those of the *Hornet*). Her destruction was hastened on account of a strange sail heaving in sight; but the latter proved to be the *Peacock*, with the *Tom Bowline* in

Biddle, was published; none of the letters of the defeated British commanders were published after 1813. As regards this action, every British writer has followed James, who begins his account thus: "Had the vessel in sight to windward been rigged with three masts instead of two, and had she proved to be a British cruiser, Captain Biddle would have marked her down in his log as a 'frigate,' and have made off with all the canvas he could possibly spread. Had the ship overtaken the *Hornet* and been in reality a trifle superior in force, Captain Biddle, we have no doubt, would have exhausted his eloquence in lauding the blessings of peace before he tried a struggle for the honors of war." After this preface (which should be read in connection with the *Hornet's* unaccepted challenge to the *Bonne Citoyenne*, a ship "a trifle superior in force") it can be considered certain that James will both extenuate and also set down a good deal in malice. One instance of this has already been given in speaking of the *President's* capture. Again, he says, "the *Hornet* received several round shot in her hull," which she did—a month after this action, from the *Cornwallis*, 74; James knew perfectly well that not one of the *Penguin's* shot hit the *Hornet's* hull. The quotations I have given are quite enough to prove that nothing he says about the action is worth attending to. The funniest part of his account is where he makes Captain Biddle get drunk, lose his "native cunning," and corroborate his (James's) statements. He does not even hint at the authority for this.

company. The latter was now turned to account by being sent into Rio de Janeiro as a cartel with the prisoners. The *Peacock* and *Hornet* remained about the Island till April 13th, and then, giving up all hopes of seeing the *President*, and rightly supposing she had been captured, started out for the East Indies. On the 27th of the month, in lat. 38° 30′ S. and long. 33° E.,[1] the *Peacock* signalled a stranger in the S.E., and both sloops crowded sail in chase. The next morning they came down with the wind aft from the northwest, the studding-sails set on both sides. The new 22-gun-sloops were not only better war vessels, but faster ones too, than any other ships of their rate; and the *Peacock* by afternoon was two leagues ahead of the *Hornet*. At 2 P.M., the former was observed to manifest some hesitation about approaching the stranger, which, instead of avoiding, had rather hauled up toward them. All on board the *Hornet* thought her an Indiaman, and "the men began to wonder what they would do with the silks," when, a few minutes before four, the *Peacock* signalled that it was a line-of-battle ship, which reversed the parts with a vengeance. Warrington's swift ship was soon out of danger, while Biddle hauled close to the wind on the port tack, with the *Cornwallis*, 74, bearing the flag of Ad-

[1] Letter of Captain Biddle, June 10th, and extracts from her log.

miral Sir George Burleton, K.C.B.,[1] in hot pursuit, two leagues on his lee quarter. The 74 gained rapidly on the *Hornet*, although she stopped to pick up a marine who had fallen overboard. Finding he had to deal with a most weatherly craft, as well as a swift sailer, Captain Biddle, at 9 P.M., began to lighten the *Hornet* of the mass of stores taken from the *Penguin*. The *Cornwallis* gained still, however, and, at 2 A.M., on the 29th, was ahead of the *Hornet's* lee or starboard beam, when the sloop put about and ran off toward the west. Daylight showed the 74 still astern and to leeward, but having gained so much as to be within gunshot, and shortly afterward she opened fire, her shot passing over the *Hornet*. The latter had recourse anew to the lightening process. She had already hove overboard the sheet-anchor, several heavy spare spars, and a large quantity of shot and ballast; the remaining anchors and cables, more shot, six guns, and the launch now followed suit, and, thus relieved, the *Hornet* passed temporarily out of danger; but the breeze shifted gradually round to the east, and the liner came looming up till at noon she was within a mile, a shorter range than that at which the *United States* crippled and cut up the *Macedonian;* and had the *Cornwallis's* fire been half as well aimed as that of the *States*, it would have been the last of the

[1] James vi., 564.

Hornet. But the 74's guns were very unskilfully served, and the shot passed for the most part away over the chase, but three getting home. Captain Biddle and his crew had no hope of ultimate escape, but no one thought of giving up. All the remaining spare spars and boats, all the guns but one, the shot, and in fact everything that could be got at, below or on deck, was thrown overboard. This increased the way of the *Hornet*, while the *Cornwallis* lost ground by hauling off to give broadsides, which were as ineffectual as the fire from the chase-guns had been. The *Hornet* now had gained a little, and managed to hold her own, and shortly afterward the pluck and skill of her crew[1] were rewarded. The shift in the wind had been very much against them, but now it veered back again so as to bring them to windward; and every minute, as it blew fresher and fresher, their chances increased. By dark, the *Cornwallis* was well astern, and during the night the wind kept freshening, blowing in squalls, which just suited the *Hornet*, and when day broke the liner was hull down astern. Then, on the morning of the 30th, after nearly forty-eight hours' chase, she

[1] It is perhaps worth noting that the accounts incidentally mention the fact that almost the entire crew consisted of native Americans, of whom *quite a number had served as impressed seamen on board British war-ships*. James multiplies these threefold and sets them down as British.

abandoned the pursuit. The *Hornet* was now, of course, no use as a cruiser, and made sail for New York, which she reached on June 9th. This chase requires almost the same comments as the last chase of the *Constitution*. In both cases the American captains and their crews deserve the very highest praise for plucky, skilful seamanship; but exactly as Stewart's coolness and promptitude might not have saved the *Constitution* had it not been for the blunders made by his antagonists, so the *Hornet* would have assuredly been taken, in spite of Biddle's stubbornness and resource, if the *Cornwallis* had not shown such unskilful gunnery, which was all the more discreditable since she carried an admiral's flag.

The *Peacock* was thus the only one left of the squadron originally prepared for the East Indies; however, she kept on, went round the Cape of Good Hope, and cruised across the Indian Ocean, capturing four great Indiamen, very valuable prizes, manned by 291 men. Then she entered the Straits of Sunda, and on the 30th of June, off the fort of Anjier, fell in with the East India Company's cruiser *Nautilus*, Lieutenant Boyce, a brig of 180 (American measurement, over 200) tons, with a crew of 80 men and 14 guns—four long 9's and ten 18-pound carronades.[1] Captain Warring-

[1] *History of the Indian Navy*, by Charles Rathbone Low (late lieutenant of the Indian Navy), London, 1877, p. 285.

ton did not know of the peace; one of the boats of the *Nautilus*, however, with her purser, Mr. Bartlett boarded him. Captain Warrington declares the latter made no mention of the peace, while Mr. Bartlett swears that he did before he was sent below. As the *Peacock* approached, Lieutenant Boyce hailed to ask if she knew peace had been declared. Captain Warrington, according to his letter, regarded this as a ruse to enable the brig to escape under the guns of the fort, and commanded the lieutenant to haul down his colors, which the latter refused to do, and very gallantly prepared for a struggle with a foe of more than twice his strength. According to Captain Warrington, one, or, by the deposition of Mr. Bartlett,[1] two broadsides were then interchanged, and the brig surrendered, having lost seven men, including her first lieutenant, killed and mortally wounded, and eight severely or slightly wounded. Two of her guns and the sheet-anchor were disabled, the bends on the starboard side completely shivered from aft to the forechains, the bulwarks from the chess-tree aft much torn, and the rigging cut to pieces.[2] The *Peacock* did not suffer the slightest loss or damage. Regarding the affair purely as a conflict between vessels of nations at war with each other,

[1] As quoted by Low.

[2] Letter of Lieutenant Boyce to Company's Marine Board, as quoted by Low.

the criticism made by Lord Howard Douglass on the action between the *President* and *Little Belt* applies here perfectly. "If a vessel meet an enemy of even greatly superior force, it is due to the honor of her flag to try the effect of a few rounds; but unless in this gallant attempt she leave marks of her skill upon the larger body, while she, the smaller body, is hit at every discharge, she does but salute her enemy's triumph and discredit her own gunnery." [1] There could not have been a more satisfactory exhibition of skill than that given by Captain Warrington; but I regret to say that it is difficult to believe he acted with proper humanity. It seems impossible that Mr. Bartlett did not mention that peace had been signed; and when the opposing force was so much less than his own it would have been safe at least to defer the order "Haul down your flag" for a short time, while he could have kept the brig within half pistol-shot, until he could have inquired into the truth of the report. Throughout this work I have, wherever possible, avoided all references to the various accusations and recriminations of some of the captains about "unfairness," "cruelty," etc., as in most cases it is impossible to get at the truth, the accounts flatly contradicting one another. In this case, however, there certainly seems some ground for the rather fervent

[1] *Naval Gunnery*, p. 3.

denunciations of Captain Warrington indulged in by Lieutenant Low. But it is well to remember that a very similar affair, with the parties reversed, had taken place but a few months before on the coast of America. This was on February 22d, after the boats of the *Erebus*, 20, and *Primrose*, 18, under Captains Bartholomew and Phillot, had been beaten off with a loss of 30 men (including both captains wounded), in an expedition up St. Mary's River, Ga. The two captains and their vessels then joined Admiral Cockburn at Cumberland Island, and on the 25th of February were informed officially of the existence of peace. Three weeks afterward the American gunboat, No. 168, Mr. Hurlburt, sailed from Tybee Bar, Ga., bearing despatches for the British admiral.[1] On the same day in the afternoon she fell in with the *Erebus*, Captain Bartholomew. Peace having been declared, and having been known to exist for over three weeks, no effort was made to avoid the British vessel; but when the gunboat neared the latter she was suddenly hailed and told to heave to. Mr. Hurlburt answered that he had despatches for Admiral Cockburn, to which Captain Bartholomew responded, with many oaths, that he did not care;

[1] Letter from Com. Campbell to Secretary of Navy, March 29, 1815, including one from Sailing-master John H. Hurlburt, of March 18, 1815, preserved in the Naval Archives, in vol. xliii., No. 125, of *Captains' Letters*. See also Niles's *Register*, viii., 104, 118, etc.

he would sink her if she did not send a boat aboard. When Mr. Hurlburt attempted to answer some muskets were discharged at him, and he was told to strike. He refused, and the *Erebus* immediately opened fire from her great guns; the gunboat had gotten so far round that her pivot-gun would not bear properly, but it was discharged across the bows of the *Erebus*, and then Mr. Hurlburt struck his colors. Although he had lain right under the foe's broadside, he suffered no loss or damage except a few ropes cut, and some shot holes in the sails. Afterward, Captain Bartholomew apologized, and let the gunboat proceed.

This attack was quite as wanton and unprovoked as Warrington's, and Bartholomew's foe was relatively to himself even less powerful; moreover, while the *Peacock's* crew showed great skill in handling their guns, the crew of the *Erebus* most emphatically did not. The intent in both cases was equally bad, only the British captain lacked the ability to carry his out.

SUMMARY

The concluding operations of the war call for much the same comments as those of the preceding years. The balance of praise certainly inclines toward the Americans. Captain John Hayes's squadron showed great hardihood, perseverance, and judgment, which were rewarded by the cap-

ture of the *President;* and Decatur's surrender seems decidedly tame. But as regards the action between the *President* and *Endymion* (taking into account the fact that the former fought almost under the guns of an overwhelming force, and was therefore obliged to expose herself far more than she otherwise would have), it showed nearly as great superiority on the side of the Americans as the frigate actions of 1812 did—in fact, probably quite as much as in the case of the *Java*. Similarly, while the *Cyane* and *Levant* did well, the *Constitution* did better; and Sir George Collier's ships certainly did not distinguish themselves when in chase of *Old Ironsides*. So with the *Hornet* in her two encounters; no one can question the pluck with which the *Penguin* was fought, but her gunnery was as bad as that of the *Cornwallis* subsequently proved. And, though the skirmish between the *Peacock* and *Nautilus* is not one to which an American cares to look back, yet, regarding it purely from a fighting standpoint, there is no question which crew was the best trained and most skilful.

LIST OF SHIPS BUILT IN 1815

Name	Rate	Where Built	Cost
Washington	74	Portsmouth	$235,861.00
Independence	74	Boston	421,810.41
Franklin	74	Philadelphia	438,149.40
Guerrière	44	"	306,158.56
Java	44	Baltimore	232,767.38
Fulton	30	New York	320,000.00
Torpedo	—	"	—

These ships first put to sea in this year. For the first time in her history, the United States possessed line-of-battle ships; and for the first time in all history, the steam frigate appeared on the navy list of a nation. The *Fulton*, with her clumsy central wheel, concealed from shot by the double hull, with such thick scantling that none but heavy guns could harm her, and relying for offensive weapons not on a broadside of thirty guns of small calibre, but on two pivotal 100-pounder columbiads, or, perhaps, if necessary, on blows from her hog snout,—the *Fulton* was the true prototype of the modern steam ironclad, with its few heavy guns and ram. Almost as significant is the presence of the *Torpedo*. I have not chronicled the several efforts made by the Americans to destroy British vessels with torpedoes; some very nearly succeeded, and although they failed it must not be supposed that they did no good. On the contrary, they made the British in many cases very cautious about venturing into good anchorage (especially in Long Island Sound and the Chesapeake), and by the mere terror of their name prevented more than one harrying expedition. The *Fulton* was not got into condition to be fought until just as the war ended; had it continued a few months, it is more than probable that the deeds of the *Merrimac* and the havoc wrought by the Confederate torpedoes would have been forestalled by

nearly half a century. As it was, neither of these engines of war attracted much attention. For ten or fifteen years the *Fulton* was the only war-vessel of her kind in existence, and then her name disappears from our lists. The torpedoes had been tried in the Revolutionary War, but their failure prevented much notice from being taken of them, and, besides, at that time there was a strong feeling that it was dishonorable to blow a ship up with a powder-can concealed *under* the water, though highly laudable to burn her by means of a fire-raft floating *on* the water—a nice distinction in naval ethics that has since disappeared.[1]

AMERICAN VESSELS DESTROYED, ETC.

By Ocean Cruisers

Name	Guns	Tonnage	Remarks
President.....	52	1,576	Captured by squadron.
	52 guns,	1,576 tons.	

BRITISH VESSELS DESTROYED, ETC.

a.—*By Privateers*

Name	Guns	Tonnage	Remarks
Chasseur.....	12	240	By privat'r *St. Lawrence.*

b.—*By Ocean Cruisers*

Cyane.....	34	659	By *Constitution.*
Levant.....	20	500	Retaken.
Penguin.....	19	477	By *Hornet.*
	85 guns,	1,876 tons.	
	20	500	(Subtracting *Levant*).
	65 guns,	1,376 tons.	

[1] James fairly foams at the mouth at the mere mention of torpedoes.

In summing up the results of the struggle on the ocean, it is to be noticed that very little was attempted, and nothing done, by the American navy, that could *materially* affect the result of the war. Commodore Rodgers's expedition after the Jamaica Plate fleet failed; both the efforts to get a small squadron into the East Indian waters also miscarried; and otherwise the whole history of the struggle on the ocean is, as regards the Americans, only the record of individual cruises and fights. The material results were not very great, at least in their effect on Great Britain, whose enormous navy did not feel in the slightest degree the loss of a few frigates and sloops. But, morally, the result was of inestimable benefit to the United States. The victories kept up the spirits of the people, cast down by the defeats on land; practically decided in favor of the Americans the chief question in dispute,—Great Britain's right of search and impressment,—and gave the navy, and thereby the country, a world-wide reputation. I doubt if ever before a nation gained so much honor by a few single-ship duels. For there can be no question which side came out of the war with the greatest credit. The damage inflicted by each on the other was not very unequal in amount, but the balance was certainly in favor of the United States, as can be seen by the following tables, for the details of which reference can be made to the various years:

	AMERICAN LOSS		BRITISH LOSS	
Caused	Tonnage	Guns	Tonnage[1]	Guns
By Ocean Cruisers...	5,984	278	8,451	351
On the Lakes.....	727	37	4,159	212
By the Army.....	3,007	116	500	22
By Privateers.....	....	...	402	20
Total.....	9,718	431	13,512	605

In addition, we lost 4 revenue-cutters, mounting 24 guns, and, in the aggregate, of 387 tons, and also 25 gunboats, with 71 guns, and, in the aggregate, of nearly 2000 tons. This would swell our loss to 12,105 tons, and 526 guns [2]; but the loss of

[1] The tonnage can only be given approximately, as that of the vessels on Lake Champlain is not exactly known, although we know about what the two fleets tonned relatively to one another.

[2] This differs greatly from the figures given by James in his *Naval Occurrences* (App. ccxv.). He makes the American loss 14,844 tons, and 660 guns. His list includes, for example, the "*Growler* and *Hamilton*, upset in carrying sail to avoid Sir James's fleet"; it would be quite as reasonable to put down the loss of the *Royal George* to the credit of the French. Then he mentions the *Julia* and *Growler*, which were recaptured; the *Asp*, which was also recaptured; the "*New York*, 46, destroyed at Washington," which was *not* destroyed or harmed in any way, and which, moreover, was a condemned hulk; the "*Boston*, 42 (in reality 32), destroyed at Washington," which had been a condemned hulk for ten years, and had no guns or anything else in her, and was as much a loss to our navy as the fishing up and burning of an old wreck would have been; and eight gunboats, whose destruction was either mythical, or else which were not national vessels. By deducting all these, we reduce James's total by 120 guns, and 2600 tons; and a few more alterations (such as

the revenue-cutters and gunboats can fairly be considered to be counterbalanced by the capture or destruction of the various British Royal Packets (all armed with from 2 to 10 guns), tenders, barges, etc., which would be in the aggregate of at least as great tonnage and gun force, and with more numerous crews.

excluding the swivels in the *President's* tops, which he counts, etc.), brings his number down to that given above—and also affords a good idea of the value to be attached to his figures and tables. The British loss he gives at but 530 guns and 10,273 tons. He omits the 24-gun ship burnt by Chauncy at York, although including the frigate and corvette burnt by Ross at Washington; if the former is excluded the two latter should be, which would make the balance still more in favor of the Americans. He omits the guns of the *Gloucester*, because they had been taken out of her and placed in battery on the shore, but he includes those of the *Adams*, which had been served in precisely the same way. He omits all reference to the British 14-gun schooner burnt on Ontario, and to all 3- and 4-gun sloops and schooners captured there, although including the corresponding American vessels. The reason that he so much underestimates the tonnage, especially on the lakes, I have elsewhere discussed. His tables of the relative loss in men are even more erroneous, exaggerating that of the Americans, and greatly underestimating that of the British; but I have not tabulated this on account of the impossibility of getting fair estimates of the killed and wounded in the cutting-out expeditions, and the difficulty of enumerating the prisoners taken in descents, etc. Roughly, about 2700 Americans and 3800 British were captured; the comparative loss in killed and wounded stood much more in our favor.

I have excluded from the British loss the brigs *Detroit* and *Caledonia*, and schooner *Nancy* (aggregating 10 guns and

But the comparative material loss gives no idea of the comparative honor gained. The British navy, numbering at the outset a thousand cruisers, had accomplished less than the American, which numbered but a dozen. Moreover, most of the loss suffered by the former was in single fight, while this had been but twice the case with the Americans, who had generally been overwhelmed by numbers. The *President* and *Essex* were both captured by more than double their force, simply because they were disabled before the fight began, otherwise they would certainly have escaped. With the exceptions of the *Chesapeake* and *Argus* (both of which were taken fairly, because their antagonists, though of only equal force, were better fighters), the remaining loss of the Americans was due to the small cruisers stumbling from time to time across the path of some one of the innumerable British heavy vessels. Had Congressional forethought been sufficiently great to have allowed a few line-of-battle ships to have been in readiness some time previous to the war, results of weight

about 500 tons), destroyed on the upper lakes, because I hardly know whether they could be considered national vessels; the schooner *Highflyer*, of 8 guns, 40 men, and 209 tons, taken by Rodgers, because she seems to have been merely a tender; and the *Dominica*, 15, of 77 men and 270 tons, because her captor, the privateer *Decatur*, though nominally an American, was really a French vessel. Of course, both tables are only approximately exact; but at any rate the balance of damage and loss was over 4 to 3 in our favor.

might have been accomplished. But the only activity ever exhibited by Congress, in materially increasing the navy previous to the war, had been in partially carrying out President Jefferson's ideas of having an enormous force of very worthless gunboats—a scheme whose wisdom was about on a par with some of that statesman's political and military theories.

Of the twelve [1] single-ship actions, two (those of the *Argus* and *Chesapeake*) undoubtedly redounded most to the credit of the British, in two (that of the *Wasp* with the *Reindeer*, and that of the *Enterprise* with the *Boxer*), the honors were nearly even, and in the other eight the superiority of the Americans was very manifest. In three actions (those with the *Penguin*, *Frolic*, and *Shannon*) the combatants were about equal in strength, the Americans having slightly the advantage; in all the others but two, the victors combined superiority of force with superiority of skill. In but two cases, those of the *Argus* and *Epervier*, could any lack of courage be imputed to

[1] Not counting the last action of the *Constitution*, the *President's* action, or the capture of the *Essex*, on account of the difficulty of fairly estimating the amount of credit due to each side. In both the first actions, however, the American ships seem to have been rather more ably fought than their antagonists, and, taking into account the overwhelming disadvantages under which the *Essex* labored, her defence displayed more desperate bravery than did that of any other ship during the war.

the vanquished. The second year alone showed to the advantage of the British; the various encounters otherwise were as creditable to the Americans at the end as at the beginning of the war. This is worth attending to, because many authors speak as if the successes of the Americans were confined to the first year. It is true that no frigate was taken after the first year, but this was partly because the strictness of the blockade kept the American frigates more in port, while the sloops put out to sea at pleasure, and partly because after that year the British 18-pounder frigates either cruised in couples, or, when single, invariably refused, by order of the Board of Admiralty, an encounter with a 24-pounder; and though much of the American success was unquestionably to be attributed to more men and heavier guns, yet much of it was not. The war itself gives us two instances in which defeat was owing solely, it may be said, to inferiority of force—courage and skill being equal. The *Wasp* was far heavier than the *Reindeer*, and, there being nothing to choose between them in anything else, the damage done was about proportionate to this difference. It follows, as a matter of course, that the very much greater disproportion in loss in the cases of the *Avon*, *Epervier*, etc., where the disproportion in force was much less (they mounting 32's instead of 24's, and the victors being all of the same class),

is only to be explained by the inferiority in skill on the part of the vanquished. These remarks apply just as much to the *Argus*. The *Reindeer*, with her 24's, would have been almost exactly on a par with her, and yet would have taken her with even greater ease than the *Peacock* did with her 32's. In other words, the only effect of our superiority in metal, men, and tonnage was to increase somewhat the disparity in loss. Had the *Congress* and *Constellation*, instead of the *United States* and *Constitution*, encountered the *Macedonian* and *Java*, the difference in execution would have been less than it was, but the result would have been unchanged, and would have been precisely such as ensued when the *Wasp* met the *Frolic*, or the *Hornet* the *Penguin*. On the other hand, had the *Shannon* met the *Constitution* there would have been a repetition of the fight between the *Wasp* and *Reindeer;* for it is but fair to remember that great as is the honor that Broke deserves, it is no more than that due to Manners.

The Republic of the United States owed a great deal to the excellent make and armament of its ships, but it owed still more to the men who were in them. The massive timbers and heavy guns of *Old Ironsides* would have availed but little had it not been for her able commanders and crews. Of all the excellent single-ship captains, British or American, produced by the war, the palm should

be awarded to Hull.[1] The deed of no other man (excepting Macdonough) equalled his escape from Broke's five ships, or surpassed his half-hour's conflict with the *Guerrière*. After him, almost all the American captains deserve high praise—Decatur, Jones, Blakely, Biddle, Bainbridge, Lawrence, Burrows, Allen, Warrington, Stewart, Porter. It is no small glory to a country to have had such men upholding the honor of its flag. On a par with the best of them are Broke, Manners, and also Byron and Blythe. It must be but a poor-spirited American whose veins do not tingle with pride when he reads of the cruises and fights of the sea-captains, and their grim prowess, which kept the old Yankee flag floating over the waters of the Atlantic for three years, in the teeth of the mightiest naval power the world has ever seen; but it is equally impossible not to admire Broke's chivalric challenge and successful fight, or the heroic death of the captain of the *Reindeer*.

Nor can the war ever be fairly understood by any one who does not bear in mind that the combatants were men of the same stock, who far more nearly resembled each other than either resembled any other nation. I honestly believe that the American sailor offered rather better material for a man-of-war's man than the British, because the

[1] See *Naval Tactics*, by Commander J. H. Ward, and *Life of Commodore Tatnall*, by Charles C. Jones, Jr.

freer institutions of his country (as compared with the Britain of the drunken Prince Regent and his dotard father—a very different land from the present free England) and the peculiar exigencies of his life tended to make him more intelligent and self-reliant; but the difference, when there was any, was very small, and disappeared entirely when his opponents had been drilled for any length of time by men like Broke or Manners. The advantage consisted in the fact that our *average* commander was equal to the best, and higher than the average, of the opposing captains; and this held good throughout the various grades of the officers. The American officers knew they had redoubtable foes to contend with, and made every preparation accordingly. Owing their rank to their own exertions, trained by practical experience and with large liberty of action, they made every effort to have their crews in the most perfect state of skill and discipline. In Commodore Tatnall's biography (p. 15) it is mentioned that the blockaded *Constellation* had her men well trained at the guns and at target practice, though still lying in the river, so as to be at once able to meet a foe when she put out to sea. The British captain, often owing his command to his social standing or to favoritism, hampered by red tape,[1] and accustomed, by twenty years' almost uninterrupted

[1] For instance, James mentions that they were forbidden

success, to regard the British arms as invincible, was apt to laugh at all manœuvring,[1] and scorned to prepare too carefully for a fight, trusting to the old British "pluck and luck" to carry him through. So, gradually, he forgot how to manœuvre or to prepare. The *Java* had been at sea six weeks before she was captured, yet during that time the entire exercise of her crew at the guns had been confined to the discharge of six broadsides of blank cartridges (James, vi., 184); the *Constitution*, like the *Java*, had shipped an entirely new and raw crew previous to her first cruise, and was at sea but five weeks before she met the *Guerrière*, and yet her men had been trained to perfection. This is a sufficient comment on the comparative merits of Captain Hull and Captain Lambert. The American prepared himself in every possible way; the Briton tried to cope with courage alone against courage united to skill. His bad gunnery had not been felt in contending with European foes[2] as unskilful as himself. Says Lord Howard Douglass (p. 3): "We entered with too much confidence into a war with a marine much more expert than

to use more than so many shot in practice, and that Captain Broke utterly disregarded this command.

[1] Lord Howard Douglass, *Naval Gunnery*, states this in various places: "Accustomed to contemn all manœuvring."

[2] Lord Howard Douglass; he seems to think that in 1812 the British had fallen off absolutely, though not relatively to their European foes.

any of our European enemies. . . . there was inferiority of gunnery as well as of force," etc. Admiral Codrington, commenting on the *Epervier's* loss, says, as before quoted, that, owing to his being chosen purely for merit, the American captain was an over-match for the British, unless "he encountered our best officers on equal terms."

The best criticism on the war is that given by Capitaine Jurien de la Gravière.[1] After speaking of the heavier metal and greater number of men of the American ships, he continues: "And yet only an enormous superiority in the precision and rapidity of their fire can explain the difference in the losses sustained by the combatants. . . . Nor was the skill of their gunners the only cause to which the Americans owed their success. Their ships were faster; the crews, composed of chosen men, manœuvred with uniformity and precision; their captains had that practical knowledge which is only to be acquired by long experience of the sea; and it is not to be wondered at that the *Constitution*, when chased during three days by a squadron of five English frigates, succeeded in escaping, by surpassing them in manœuvring, and by availing herself of every ingenious resource and skilful expedient that maritime science could suggest. . . . To a marine exalted by success,

[1] *Guerres Maritimes*, ii., 269, 272, 274 (Paris, 1847).

but rendered negligent by the very habit of victory, the Congress only opposed the best of vessels and most formidable of armaments. . . ." [1]

It is interesting to compare the results of this inter-Anglian warfare, waged between the Insular and the Continental English, with the results of the contest that the former were at the same time carrying on with their Gallo-Roman neighbors across the channel. For this purpose I shall rely on Troude's *Batailles Navales*, which would certainly not give the English more than their due. His account of the comparative force in each case can be supplemented by the corresponding one given in James. Under drawn battles I include all such as were indecisive, in so far that neither combatant was captured; in almost every case each captain claimed that the other ran away.

During the years 1812 to 1815, inclusive, there were eight actions between French and English ships of approximately equal force. In three of these, the English were victorious.

In 1812, the *Victorious*, 74, captured the *Rivoli*, 74.

[1] The praise should be given to the individual captains and *not* to Congress, however; and none of the American ships had picked crews. During the war the *Shannon* had the only crew which could with any fairness be termed "picked," for her men had been together seven years, and all of her "boys" must have been well-grown young men, much older than the boys on her antagonist.

COMPARATIVE FORCE

Broadsides, Metal, lbs.

	Troude	James
Victorious	1,014	1,060
Rivoli	1,010	1,085

In 1814, the *Tagus* captured the *Ceres* and the *Hebrus* captured the *Étoile*.

Broadsides, Metal, lbs.

	Troude	James
Tagus	444	467
Ceres	428	463
Hebrus	467	467
Étoile	428	463

The *Ceres*, when she surrendered, had but one man wounded, although she had suffered a good deal aloft. The fight between the 74's was murderous to an almost unexampled degree, 125 English and 400 French falling. The *Hebrus* lost 40 and the *Étoile* 120 men.

Five actions were "drawn."

In 1812, the *Swallow* fought the *Renard* and *Garland*. The former threw 262, the latter 290 pounds of shot at a broadside.

In 1815, the *Pilot*, throwing 262 pounds, fought a draw with the *Egerie*, throwing 260.

In 1814, two frigates of the force of the *Tagus* fought a draw with two frigates of the force of the *Ceres;* and the *Eurotas*, with 24-pounders, failed

to capture the *Chlorinde*, which had only 18-pounders.

In 1815, the *Amelia* fought a draw with the *Arethuse*, the ships throwing, respectively, 549 and 463 pounds, according to the English, or 572 and 410, pounds, according to the French, accounts. In spite of being superior in force, the English ship lost 141 men, and the French but 105. This was a bloodier fight than even that of the *Chesapeake* with the *Shannon;* but the gunnery was, nevertheless, much worse than that shown by the two combatants in the famous duel off Boston harbor, one battle lasting four hours and the other fifteen minutes.

There were a number of other engagements where the British were successful, but where it is difficult to compare the forces. Twice a 74 captured or destroyed two frigates, and a razee performed a similar feat. An 18-gun brig, the *Weasel*, fought two 16-gun brigs till one of them blew up.

The loss of the two navies at each other's hands during the four years was:

English Ships	French Ships
1 16-gun brig	3 line-of-battle ships
1 12-gun brig	11 frigates
1 10-gun cutter	2 26-gun flûtes
	2 16-gun brigs
	1 10-gun brig
	Many gunboats, etc.

Or one navy lost three vessels, mounting 38 guns, and the other 19 vessels, mounting 830 guns.

During the same time, the English lost to the Danes one 14-gun brig, and destroyed in return a frigate of 46 guns, a 6-gun schooner, a 4-gun cutter, two galliots and several gun-brigs.

In the above lists it is to be noticed how many of the engagements were indecisive, owing chiefly to the poor gunnery of the combatants. The fact that both the *Eurotas* and the *Amelia*, though more powerfully armed and manned than the *Hebrus*, yet failed to capture the sister ships of the frigate taken by the latter, shows that heavy metal and a numerous crew are not the only elements necessary for success; indeed, the *Eurotas* and *Amelia* were as superior in force to their antagonists as the *Constitution* was to the *Java*.

But the chief point to be noticed is the overwhelming difference in the damage the two navies caused each other. This difference was, roughly, as five to one against the Danes, and as fifty to one against the French; while it was as four to three in favor of the American. These figures give some idea of the effectiveness of the various navies. At any rate, they show that we had found out what the European nations had for many years in vain striven to discover—a way to do more damage than we received in a naval contest with England.

CHAPTER IV

1815

THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

The war on land generally disastrous—British send expedition against New Orleans—Jackson prepares for the defence of the city—Night attack on the British advance guard—Artillery duels—Great battle of January 8, 1815—Slaughtering repulse of the main attack—Rout of the Americans on the right bank of the river—Final retreat of the British—Observations on the character of the troops and commanders engaged.

WHILE our navy had been successful, the war on land had been for us full of humiliation. The United States then formed but a loosely knit confederacy, the sparse population scattered over a great expanse of land. Ever since the Federalist party had gone out of power in 1800, the nation's ability to maintain order at home and enforce respect abroad had steadily dwindled; and the twelve years' nerveless reign of the Doctrinaire Democracy had left us impotent for attack and almost as feeble for defence. Jefferson, though a man whose views and theories had a profound influence upon our national life, was perhaps the most incapable Executive that ever filled the presidential chair; being almost

purely a visionary, he was utterly unable to grapple with the slightest actual danger, and, not even excepting his successor, Madison, it would be difficult to imagine a man less fit to guide the State with honor and safety through the stormy times that marked the opening of the present century. Without the prudence to avoid war or the forethought to prepare for it, the Administration drifted helplessly into a conflict in which only the navy prepared by the Federalists twelve years before, and weakened rather than strengthened during the intervening time, saved us from complete and shameful defeat. True to its theories, the House of Virginia made no preparations, and thought the war could be fought by "the nation in arms"; the exponents of this particular idea, the militiamen, a partially armed mob, ran like sheep whenever brought into the field. The regulars were not much better. After two years of warfare, Scott records in his autobiography that there were but two books of tactics (one written in French) in the entire army on the Niagara frontier; and officers and men were on such a dead level of ignorance that he had to spend a month drilling all of the former, divided into squads, in the school of the soldier and school of the company.[1] It is small wonder that such troops were

[1] *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Scott*, written by himself (2 vols., New York, 1864), i., p. 115.

utterly unable to meet the English. Until near the end, the generals were as bad as the armies they commanded, and the administration of the War Department continued to be a triumph of imbecility to the very last.[1] With the exception of the brilliant and successful charge of the Kentucky Mounted Infantry at the battle of the Thames, the only bright spot in the war in the North was the campaign on the Niagara frontier during the summer of 1814; and even here, the chief battle, that of Lundy's Lane, though reflecting as much honor on the Americans as on the British, was for the former a defeat, and not a victory, as most of our writers seem to suppose.

But the war had a dual aspect. It was partly a contest between the two branches of the English race, and partly a last attempt on the part of the Indian tribes to check the advance of the most rapidly growing one of these same two branches; and this last portion of the struggle, though attracting comparatively little attention, was really much the most far-reaching in its effect upon his-

[1] Monroe's biographer (see *James Monroe*, by Daniel C. Gilman, Boston, 1883, p. 123) thinks he made a good Secretary of War; I think he was as much a failure as his predecessors, and a harsher criticism could not be passed on him. Like the other statesmen of his school, he was mighty in word and weak in action; bold to plan but weak to perform. As an instance, contrast his fiery letters to Jackson with the fact that he never gave him a particle of practical help.

tory. The triumph of the British would have distinctly meant the giving a new lease of life to the Indian nationalities, the hemming in, for a time, of the United States, and the stoppage, perhaps for many years, of the march of English civilization across the continent. The English of Britain were doing all they could to put off the day when their race would reach to a world-wide supremacy.

There was much fighting along our Western frontier with various Indian tribes; and it was especially fierce in the campaign that a backwoods general of Tennessee, named Andrew Jackson, carried on against the powerful confederacy of the Creeks, a nation that was thrust in like a wedge between the United States proper and their dependency, the newly acquired French Province of Louisiana. After several slaughtering fights, the most noted being the battle of the Horse-Shoe Bend, the power of the Creeks was broken forever; and afterward, as there was much question over the proper boundaries of what was then the Latin land of Florida, Jackson marched south, attacked the Spaniards, and drove them from Pensacola. Meanwhile, the British, having made a successful and ravaging summer campaign through Virginia and Maryland, situated in the heart of the country, organized the most formidable expedition of the war for a winter campaign against the outlying land of Louisiana, whose defender Jackson, of

necessity, became. Thus, in the course of events, it came about that Louisiana was the theatre on which the final and most dramatic act of the war was played.

Amid the gloomy, semi-tropical swamps that cover the quaking delta thrust out into the blue waters of the Mexican Gulf by the strong torrent of the mighty Mississippi, stood the fair, French city of New Orleans. Its lot had been strange and varied. Won and lost once and again, in conflict with the subjects of the Catholic king, there was a strong Spanish tinge in the French blood that coursed so freely through the veins of its citizens; joined by purchase to the great Federal Republic, it yet shared no feeling with the latter, save that of hatred to the common foe. And now an hour of sore need had come upon the city; for against it came the red English, lords of fight by sea and land. A great fleet of war vessels—ships of the line, frigates, and sloops—under Admiral Cochrane, was on the way to New Orleans, convoying a still larger fleet of troop ships, with aboard them some ten thousand fighting men, chiefly the fierce and hardy veterans of the Peninsular War,[1] who had

[1] "The British infantry embarked at Bordeaux, some for America, some for England." (*History of the War in the Peninsula*, by Major-General Sir W. F. P. Napier, K.C.B. New edition. New York, 1882. Vol. v., p. 200.) For discussion of numbers, see farther on.

been trained for seven years in the stern school of the Iron Duke, and who were now led by one of the bravest and ablest of all Wellington's brave and able lieutenants, Sir Edward Packenham.

On the 8th of December, 1814, the foremost vessels, with among their number the great two-decker *Tonnant*, carrying the admiral's flag, anchored off the Chandeleur Islands [1]; and as the current of the Mississippi was too strong to be easily breasted, the English leaders determined to bring their men by boats through the bayous, and disembark them on the bank of the river ten miles below the wealthy city at whose capture they were aiming. There was but one thing to prevent the success of this plan, and that was the presence in the bayous of five American gunboats, manned by a hundred and eighty men, and commanded by Lieutenant-commanding Catesby Jones, a very shrewd fighter. So against him was sent Captain Nicholas Lockyer with forty-five barges, and nearly a thousand sailors and marines, men who had grown gray during a quarter of a century of unbroken ocean warfare. The gunboats were moored in a head-and-stern line, near the Rigolets, with their boarding-nettings triced up, and everything ready to do desperate battle; but the British rowed up with strong, swift strokes, through a murderous fire of great guns and musketry; the vessels were

[1] See *ante*, p. 151.

grappled amid fierce resistance; the boarding-nettings were slashed through and cut away; with furious fighting the decks were gained; and one by one, at push of pike and cutlass stroke, the gun-boats were carried in spite of their stubborn defenders; but not till more than one barge had been sunk, while the assailants had lost a hundred men, and the assailed about half as many.

There was now nothing to hinder the landing of the troops; and as the scattered transports arrived the soldiers were disembarked, and ferried through the sluggish water of the bayous on small flat-bottomed craft; and, finally, December 23d, the advance guard, two thousand strong, under General Keane, emerged at the mouth of the canal Villeré, and camped on the bank of the river,[1] but nine miles below New Orleans, which now seemed a certain prize, almost within their grasp.

Yet, although a mighty and cruel foe was at their very gates, nothing save fierce defiance reigned in the fiery creole hearts of the Crescent City. For a master-spirit was in their midst. Andrew Jackson, having utterly broken and destroyed the most powerful Indian confederacy that had ever menaced the Southwest, and having driven the haughty Spaniards from Pensacola, was now bending all the energies of his rugged intellect and

[1] Letter of Major-General John Keane, December 26, 1814.

indomitable will to the one object of defending New Orleans. No man could have been better fitted for the task. He had hereditary wrongs to avenge on the British, and he hated them with an implacable fury that was absolutely devoid of fear. Born and brought up among the lawless characters of the frontier, and knowing well how to deal with them, he was able to establish and preserve the strictest martial law in the city without in the least quelling the spirit of the citizens. To a restless and untiring energy he united sleepless vigilance and genuine military genius. Prompt to attack whenever the chance offered itself, seizing with ready grasp the slightest vantage-ground, and never giving up a foot of earth that he could keep, he yet had the patience to play a defensive game when it so suited him, and with consummate skill he always followed out the scheme of warfare that was best adapted to his wild soldiery. In after years he did to his country some good and more evil; but no true American can think of his deeds at New Orleans without profound and unmixed thankfulness.

He had not reached the city till December 2d, and had therefore but three weeks in which to prepare the defence. The Federal Government, throughout the campaign, did absolutely nothing for the defence of Louisiana; neither provisions nor munitions of war of any sort were sent to it,

nor were any measures taken for its aid.[1] The inhabitants had been in a state of extreme despondency up to the time that Jackson arrived, for they had no one to direct them, and they were weakened by factional divisions[2]; but after his coming there was nothing but the utmost enthusiasm displayed, so great was the confidence he inspired, and so firm his hand in keeping down all opposition. Under his direction earthworks were thrown up to defend all the important positions, the whole population working night and day at them; all the available artillery was mounted, and every ounce of war material that the city contained was seized; martial law was proclaimed; and all general business was suspended, everything being rendered subordinate to the one grand object of defence.

Jackson's forces were small. There were two war vessels in the river. One was the little schooner *Carolina*, manned by regular seamen, largely New Englanders. The other was the newly built ship *Louisiana*, a powerful corvette; she had, of course, no regular crew, and her officers were straining every nerve to get one from the varied ranks of the maritime population of New

[1] *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana* (by Major A. Lacarriex Latour, translated from the French by H. P. Nugent, Philadelphia, 1816), p. 66.

[2] Latour, 53.

Orleans: long-limbed and hard-visaged Yankees, Portuguese, and Norwegian seamen from foreign merchantmen, dark-skinned Spaniards from the West Indies, swarthy Frenchmen who had served under the bold privateersman Lafitte,—all alike were taken, and all alike by unflagging exertions were got into shape for battle.[1] There were two regiments of regulars, numbering together about eight hundred men, raw and not very well disciplined, but who were now drilled with great care and regularity. In addition to this, Jackson raised somewhat over a thousand militiamen among the citizens. There were some Americans among them, but they were mostly French creoles,[2] and one band had in its formation something that was curiously pathetic. It was composed of free men of color,[3] who had gathered to defend the land which kept the men of their race in slavery; who were to shed their blood for the Flag that symbolized to their kind not freedom but bondage; who were to die bravely as freemen, only that their brethren might live on ignobly as slaves. Surely, there was never a stranger instance than this of the irony of fate.

But if Jackson had been forced to rely only on these troops, New Orleans could not have been

[1] Letter of Commodore Daniel G. Patterson, December 20, 1814.

[2] Latour, 110.

[3] Latour, 111.

saved. His chief hope lay in the volunteers of Tennessee, who, under their Generals, Coffee and Carroll, were pushing their toilsome and weary way toward the city. Every effort was made to hurry their march through the almost impassable roads, and at last, in the very nick of time, on the 23d of December, the day on which the British troops reached the river bank, the vanguard of the Tennesseeans marched into New Orleans. Gaunt of form and grim of face, with their powder-horns slung over their buckskin shirts, carrying their long rifles on their shoulders and their heavy hunting-knives stuck in their belts, with their coon-skin caps and fringed leggings,—thus came the grizzly warriors of the backwoods, the heroes of the Horse-Shoe Bend, the victors over Spaniard and Indian, eager to pit themselves against the trained regulars of Britain, and to throw down the gage of battle to the world-renowned infantry of the island English. Accustomed to the most lawless freedom, and to giving free rein to the full violence of their passions, defiant of discipline and impatient of the slightest restraint, caring little for God and nothing for man, they were soldiers who, under an ordinary commander, would have been fully as dangerous to themselves and their leaders as to their foes. But Andrew Jackson was of all men the one best fitted to manage such troops. Even their fierce natures quailed before

the ungovernable fury of a spirit greater than their own; and their sullen, stubborn wills were bent at last before his unyielding temper and iron hand. Moreover, he was one of themselves; he typified their passions and prejudices, their faults and their virtues; he shared their hardships as if he had been a common private, and, in turn, he always made them partakers of his triumphs. They admired his personal prowess with pistol and rifle, his unswerving loyalty to his friends, and the relentless and unceasing war that he waged alike on the foes of himself and his country. As a result, they loved and feared him as few generals have ever been loved or feared; they obeyed him unhesitatingly; they followed his lead without flinching or murmuring, and they ever made good on the field of battle the promise their courage held out to his judgment.

It was noon of December 23d when General Keane, with nineteen hundred men, halted and pitched his camp on the east bank of the Mississippi; and in the evening enough additional troops arrived to swell his force to over twenty-three hundred soldiers.[1] Keane's encampment was in a long plain, rather thinly covered with fields and

[1] James (*Military Occurrences of the Late War*, by Wm. James, London, 1818), vol. ii., p. 362, says 2050 rank and file; the English returns, as already explained, unlike the French and American, never included officers, sergeants, drummers, artillerymen, or engineers, but only "sabres and bayonets"

farmhouses, about a mile in breadth, and bounded on one side by the river, on the other by gloomy and impenetrable cypress swamps; and there was no obstacle interposed between the British camp and the city it menaced.

At two in the afternoon word was brought to Jackson that the foe had reached the river bank, and, without a moment's delay, the old backwoods fighter prepared to strike a rough first blow. At once, and as if by magic, the city started from her state of rest into one of fierce excitement and eager preparation. The alarm-guns were fired; in every quarter the war-drums were beaten; while, amid the din and clamor, all the regulars and marines, the best of the creole militia, and the vanguard of the Tennesseeans, under Coffee,—forming a total of a little more than two thousand men,[1]—were assembled in great haste; and the

(Napier, iv., 252). At the end of Napier's fourth volume is given the "morning state" of Wellington's forces on April 10, 1814. This shows 56,030 rank and file and 7431 officers, sergeants, and trumpeters or drummers; or, in other words, to get at the real British force in an action, even supposing there are no artillerymen or engineers present, 13 per cent. must be added to the given number, which includes only rank and file. Making this addition, Keane had 2310 men. The Americans greatly overestimated his force, Latour making it 4980.

[1] General Jackson, in his official letter, says only 1500; but Latour, in a detailed statement, makes it 2024; exclusive of 107 Mississippi dragoons who marched with the column, but being on horseback had to stay behind, and took no part in the action. Keane thought he had been attacked by 5000 men.

gray of the winter twilight saw them, with Old Hickory at their head, marching steadily along the river bank toward the camp of their foes. Patterson, meanwhile, in the schooner *Carolina*, dropped down with the current to try the effect of a flank attack.

Meanwhile, the British had spent the afternoon in leisurely arranging their camp, in posting the pickets, and in foraging among the farmhouses. There was no fear of attack, and as the day ended huge camp-fires were lit, at which the hungry soldiers cooked their suppers undisturbed. One division of the troops had bivouacked on the high levee that kept the waters from flooding the land near by; and about half-past seven in the evening their attention was drawn to a large schooner which had dropped noiselessly down, in the gathering dusk, and had come to anchor a short distance off shore, the force of the stream swinging her broadside to the camp.[1] The soldiers crowded down to the water's edge, and, as the schooner returned no answer to their hails, a couple of musket-shots were fired at her. As if in answer to this challenge, the men on shore heard plainly the

[1] I have taken my account of the night action chiefly from the work of an English soldier who took part in it: Ensign (afterward Chaplain-General) H. R. Gleig's *Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army at Washington, Baltimore, and New Orleans*. (New edition, Philadelphia, 1821, pp. 286–300.)

harsh voice of her commander, as he sang out: "Now then, give it to them for the honor of America"; and at once a storm of grape hurtled into their ranks. Wild confusion followed. The only field-pieces with Keane were two light 3-pounders, not able to cope with the *Carolina*'s artillery; the rocket-guns were brought up, but were speedily silenced; musketry proved quite as ineffectual; and in a very few minutes the troops were driven helter-skelter off the levee, and were forced to shelter themselves behind it, not without having suffered severe loss.[1] The night was now as black as pitch; the embers of the deserted camp-fires, beaten about and scattered by the schooner's shot, burned with a dull red glow; and at short intervals the darkness was momentarily lit up by the flashes of the *Carolina's* guns. Crouched behind the levee, the British soldiers lay motionless, listening in painful silence to the pattering of the grape among the huts, and to the moans and shrieks of the wounded who lay beside them. Things continued thus till toward nine o'clock, when a straggling fire from the pickets gave warning of the approach of a more formidable foe. The American land-forces had reached the outer lines of the British camp, and the increasing din of the

[1] General Keane, in his letter, writes that the British suffered but a single casualty; Gleig, who was present, says (p. 288): "The deadly shower of grape swept down numbers in the camp."

musketry, with ringing through it the whip-like crack of the Tennesseean rifles, called out the whole British army to the shock of a desperate and uncertain strife. The young moon had by this time struggled through the clouds, and cast on the battle-field a dim, unearthly light that but partly relieved the intense darkness. All order was speedily lost. Each officer, American or British, as fast as he could gather a few soldiers round him, attacked the nearest group of foes; the smoke and gloom would soon end the struggle, when, if unhurt, he would rally what men he could and plunge once more into the fight. The battle soon assumed the character of a multitude of individual combats, dying out almost as soon as they began, because of the difficulty of telling friend from foe, and beginning with ever-increasing fury as soon as they had ended. The clatter of the firearms, the clashing of steel, the rallying cries and loud commands of the officers, the defiant shouts of the men, joined to the yells and groans of those who fell, all combined to produce so terrible a noise and tumult that it maddened the coolest brains. From one side or the other bands of men would penetrate into the heart of the enemy's lines, and would there be captured, or would cut their way out with the prisoners they had taken. There was never a fairer field for the fiercest personal prowess, for in the darkness the firearms were

of little service, and the fighting was hand to hand. Many a sword, till then but a glittering toy, was that night crusted with blood. The British soldiers and the American regulars made fierce play with their bayonets, and the Tennesseeans, with their long hunting-knives. Man to man, in grimmest hate, they fought and died, some by bullet and some by bayonet-thrust or stroke of sword. More than one in his death agony slew the foe at whose hand he himself had received the mortal wound; and their bodies stiffened as they lay, locked in the death grip. Again the clouds came over the moon; a thick fog crept up from the river, wrapping from sight the ghastly havoc of the battle-field; and long before midnight the fighting stopped perforce, for the fog and the smoke and the gloom were such that no one could see a yard away. By degrees each side drew off.[1] In sullen silence, Jackson marched his men up the river, while the wearied British returned to their camp. The former had lost over two hundred,[2]

[1] Keane writes: "The enemy thought it prudent to retire, and did not again dare to advance. It was now 12 o'clock, and the firing ceased on both sides"; and Jackson: "We should have succeeded . . . in capturing the enemy, had not a thick fog, which arose about (?) o'clock, occasioned some confusion. . . . I contented myself with lying on the field that night." Jackson certainly failed to capture the British; but equally certainly damaged them so as to arrest their march till he was in condition to meet and check them.

[2] 24 killed, 115 wounded, 74 missing.

the latter nearly three hundred[1] men; for the darkness and confusion that added to the horror lessened the slaughter of the battle.

Jackson drew back about three miles, where he halted and threw up a long line of breastworks, reaching from the river to the morass; he left a body of mounted riflemen to watch the British. All the English troops reached the field on the day after the fight; but the rough handling that the foremost had received made them cautious about advancing. Moreover, the left division was kept behind the levee all day by the *Carolina*, which opened upon them whenever they tried to get away; nor was it till dark that they made their escape out of range of her cannon. Christmas day opened drearily enough for the invaders. Although they were well inland, the schooner, by greatly elevating her guns, could sometimes reach them, and she annoyed them all through the day[2]; and as the Americans had cut the levee in their front, it at one time seemed likely that they would be drowned out. However, matters now took a turn for the better. The river was so low that the

[1] 46 killed, 167 wounded, 64 missing. I take the official return for each side as authority for the respective force and loss.

[2] "While sitting at table, a loud shriek was heard. . . . A shot had taken effect on the body of an unfortunate soldier . . . who was fairly cut in two at the lower portion of the belly!" (Gleig, p. 306.)

cutting of the levee instead of flooding the plain [1] merely filled the shrunken bayous, and rendered it easy for the British to bring up their heavy guns; and on the same day their trusted leader, Sir Edward Packenham, arrived to take command in person, and his presence gave new life to the whole army. A battery was thrown up during the two succeeding nights on the brink of the river opposite to where the *Carolina* lay; and at dawn a heavy cannonade of red-hot shot and shell was opened upon her from eleven guns and a mortar.[2] She responded briskly, but very soon caught fire and blew up, to the vengeful joy of the troops whose bane she had been for the past few days. Her destruction removed the last obstacle to the immediate advance of the army; but that night her place was partly taken by the mounted riflemen, who rode down to the British lines, shot the sentries, engaged the outposts, and kept the whole camp in a constant state of alarm.[3]

In the morning Sir Edward Packenham put his army in motion, and marched on New Orleans. When he had gone nearly three miles he suddenly, and to his great surprise, stumbled on the American army. Jackson's men had worked like beav-

[1] Latour, 113.

[2] Gleig, 307. The Americans thought the battery consisted of five 18- and 12-pounders; Gleig says nine field-pieces (9- and 6-pounders), two howitzers, and a mortar.

[3] Gleig, 310.

ers, and his breastworks were already defended by over three thousand fighting men,[1] and by half a dozen guns, and moreover were flanked by the corvette *Louisiana*, anchored in the stream. No sooner had the heads of the British columns appeared than they were driven back by the fire of the American batteries; the field-pieces, mortars, and rocket-guns were then brought up, and a sharp artillery duel took place. The motley crew of the *Louisiana* handled their long ship guns with particular effect; the British rockets proved of but little service[2]; and, after a stiff fight, in which they had two field-pieces and a light mortar dismounted,[3] the British artillerymen fell back on the infantry. Then Packenham drew off his whole army out of cannon shot, and pitched his camp facing the intrenched lines of the Americans. For the next three days the British battalions lay quietly in front of their foe, like wolves who have brought to bay a gray boar, and crouch just out of reach of his tusks, waiting a chance to close in.

[1] 3282 men in all, according to the Adjutant-General's return for December 28, 1814. [2] Latour, 121.

[3] Gleig, 314. The official returns show a loss of 18 Americans and 58 British, the latter suffering much less than Jackson supposed. Lossing, in his *Field-Book of the War of 1812*, not only greatly overestimates the British loss, but speaks as if this was a serious attack, which it was not. Packenham's army, while marching, unexpectedly came upon the American intrenchment, and recoiled at once, after seeing that his field-pieces were unable to contend with the American artillery.

Packenham, having once tried the strength of Jackson's position, made up his mind to breach his works and silence his guns with a regular battering train. Heavy cannon were brought up from the ships, and a battery was established on the bank to keep in check the *Louisiana*. Then, on the night of the last day of the year, strong parties of workmen were sent forward, who, shielded by the darkness, speedily threw up stout earthworks, and mounted therein fourteen heavy guns,[1] to face the thirteen [2] mounted in Jackson's lines, which were but three hundred yards distant.

New Year's day dawned very misty. As soon as the haze cleared off, the British artillerymen opened with a perfect hail of balls, accompanied by a cloud of rockets and mortar-shells. The Americans were taken by surprise, but promptly returned the fire, with equal fury and greater skill.

[1] Ten long 18's and four 24-pound carronades (James, ii., 368). Gleig says (p. 318), "6 batteries mounting 30 pieces of heavy cannon." This must include the "brigade of field-pieces" of which James speaks. Nine of these, 9- and 6-pounders, and two howitzers, had been used in the attack on the *Carolina;* and there were also two field-mortars and two 3-pounders present; and there must have been one other field-piece with the army, to make up the thirty of which Gleig speaks.

[2] Viz.: one long 32, three long 24's, 1 long 18, three long 12's, three long 6's, a 6-inch howitzer, and a small carronade (Latour, p. 147); and on the same day Patterson had in his water-battery one long 24 and two long 12's (see his letter of January 2d), making a total of 16 American guns.

Their guns were admirably handled; some by the cool New England seamen lately forming the crew of the *Carolina*, others by the fierce creole privateersmen of Lafitte, and still others by the trained artillerymen of the regular army. They were all old hands, who in their time had done their fair share of fighting, and were not to be flurried by any attack, however unexpected. The British cannoneers plied their guns like fiends, and fast and thick fell their shot; more slowly, but with surer aim, their opponents answered them.[1] The cotton bales used in the American embrasures caught fire, and blew up two powder caissons; while the sugar-hogsheads of which the British batteries were partly composed were speedily shattered and splintered in all directions. Though the British champions fought with unflagging

[1] The British historian, Alison, says (*History of Europe*, by Sir Archibald Alison, 9th edition, Edinburgh and London, 1852, vol. xii., p. 141): "It was soon found that the enemy's guns were so superior in weight and number, that nothing was to be expected from that species of attack." As shown above; at this time Jackson had on both sides of the river 16 guns, the British, according to both James and Gleig, between 20 and 30. Jackson's long guns were one 32, four 24's, one 18, five 12's, and three 6's, throwing in all 224 pounds; Packenham had ten long 18's, two long 3's, and from six to ten long 9's and 6's, thus throwing between 228 and 258 pounds of shot; while Jackson had but one howitzer and one carronade to oppose four carronades, two howitzers, two mortars, and a dozen rocket-guns; so, in both number and weight of guns, the British were greatly superior.

courage and untiring energy, and though they had long been versed in war, yet they seemed to lack the judgment to see and correct their faults, and most of their shot went too high.[1] On the other hand, the old sea-dogs and trained regulars who held the field against them, not only fought their guns well and skilfully from the beginning, but all through the action kept coolly correcting their faults and making more sure their aim. Still, the fight was stiff and well contested. Two of the American guns were disabled and 34 of their men were killed or wounded. But one by one the British cannon were silenced or dismounted, and by noon their gunners had all been driven away, with the loss of 78 of their number.

The *Louisiana* herself took no part in this action. Patterson had previously landed some of her guns on the opposite bank of the river, placing them in a small redoubt. To match these the British also threw up some works and placed in

[1] In strong contrast to Alison, Admiral Codrington, an eye-witness, states the true reason of the British failure (*Memoir of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington*, by Lady Bourchier, London, 1873, vol. i., p. 334): "On the 1st we had our batteries ready, by severe labor, in a situation from which the artillery people were, as a matter of course, to destroy and silence the opposing batteries, and give opportunity for a well-arranged storm. But instead, not a gun of the enemy appeared to suffer, and our own firing too high was not discovered till" too late. "Such a failure in this boasted arm was not to be expected, and I think it a blot on the artillery escutcheon."

them heavy guns, and all through New Year's day a brisk cannonade was kept up across the river between the two water-batteries, but with very little damage to either side.

For a week after this failure the army of the invaders lay motionless, facing the Americans. In the morning and evening the defiant, rolling challenge of the English drums came throbbing up through the gloomy cypress swamps to where the grim riflemen of Tennessee were lying behind their log breastworks, and both day and night the stillness was at short intervals broken by the sullen boom of the great guns which, under Jackson's orders, kept up a never-ending fire on the leaguering camp of his foes.[1] Nor could the wearied British even sleep undisturbed; all through the hours of darkness the outposts were engaged in a most harassing bush warfare by the backwoodsmen, who shot the sentries, drove in the pickets, and allowed none of those who were on guard a moment's safety or freedom from alarm.[2]

But Packenham was all the while steadily preparing for his last and greatest stroke. He had determined to make an assault in force as soon as the expected reinforcements came up; nor, in the light of his past experience in conflict with foes of far greater military repute than those now before

[1] Gleig, 322.

[2] Gleig, 323.

him, was this a rash resolve. He had seen the greatest of Napoleon's marshals, each in turn, defeated once and again, and driven in headlong flight over the Pyrenees by the Duke of Wellington; now he had under him the flower of the troops who had won those victories; was it to be supposed for a moment that such soldiers [1] who, in a dozen battles, had conquered the armies and captured the forts of the mighty French emperor, would shrink at last from a mud wall guarded by rough backwoodsmen? That there would be loss of life in such an assault was certain; but was loss of life to daunt men who had seen the horrible slaughter through which the stormers moved on to victory at Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, and San Sebastian? At the battle of Toulouse an English army, of which Packenham's troops then formed part, had driven Soult from a stronger position than was now to be assailed, though he held it with a veteran infantry. Of a surety, the dashing general who had delivered the decisive blow on the

[1] Speaking of Soult's overthrow a few months previous to this battle, Napier says (v., 209): "He was opposed to one of the greatest generals of the world, at the head of unconquerable troops. For what Alexander's Macedonians were at Arbela, Hannibal's Africans at Cannæ, Cæsar's Romans at Pharsalia, Napoleon's Guards at Austerlitz—such were Wellington's British soldiers at this period. . . . Six years of uninterrupted success had engrafted on their natural strength and fierceness a confidence that made them invincible."

stricken field of Salamanca,[1] who had taken part in the rout of the ablest generals and steadiest soldiers of Continental Europe, was not the man to flinch from a motley array of volunteers, militia, and raw regulars, led by a grizzled old bush-fighter, whose name had never been heard of outside of his own swamps, and there only as the savage destroyer of some scarcely more savage Indian tribes.

Moreover, Packenham was planning a flank attack. Under his orders a canal was being dug from the head of the bayou up which the British had come, across the plain to the Mississippi. This was to permit the passage of a number of ships' boats, on which one division was to be ferried to

[1] "It was about 5 o'clock when Packenham fell upon Thomières. . . . From the chief to the lowest soldier, all [of the French] felt that they were lost, and in an instant Packenham, the most frank and gallant of men, commenced the battle. The British columns formed lines as they marched, and the French gunners, standing up manfully for the honor of their country, sent showers of grape into the advancing masses while a crowd of light troops poured in a fire of musketry, under cover of which the main body endeavored to display a front. But, bearing onwards through the skirmishes with the might of a giant, Packenham broke the half-formed lines into fragments, and sent the whole in confusion upon the advancing supports. . . . Packenham, bearing onwards with conquering violence, . . . formed one formidable line two miles in advance of where Packenham had first attacked; and that impetuous officer, with unmitigated strength, still pressed forward, spreading terror and disorder on the enemy's left." (Napier, iv., 57, 58, 59.)

the opposite bank of the river, where it was to move up, and, by capturing the breastworks and water-battery on the west side, flank Jackson's main position on the east side.[1] When this canal was nearly finished the expected reinforcements, two thousand strong, under General Lambert, arrived, and by the evening of the 7th all was ready for the attack, which was to be made at daybreak on the following morning. Packenham had under him nearly 10,000[2] fighting men; 1500 of these,

[1] "A particular feature in the assault was our cutting a canal into the Mississippi. . . . to convey a force to the right bank, which . . . might surprise the enemy's batteries on that side. I do not know how far this measure was relied on by the general, but, as he ordered and made his assault at daylight, I imagine he did not place much dependence upon it." (Codrington, i., 335.)

[2] James (ii., 373) says the British "rank and file" amounted to 8153 men, including 1200 seamen and marines. The only other place where he speaks of the latter is in recounting the attack on the right bank, when he says "about 200" were with Thornton, while both the admirals, Cochrane and Codrington, make the number 300; so he probably underestimates their number throughout, and at least 300 can be added, making 1500 sailors and marines, and a total of 8453. This number is corroborated by Major McDougal, the officer who received Sir Edward's body in his arms when he was killed; he says (as quoted in the *Memoirs of British Generals Distinguished During the Peninsular War*, by John William Cole, London, 1856, vol. ii., p. 364) that after the battle and the loss of 2036 men, "we had still an effective force of 6400," making a total before the attack of 8436 rank and file. Calling it 8450, and adding 13.3 per cent. for the officers, sergeants, and trumpeters, we get about 9600 men.

under Colonel Thornton, were to cross the river and make the attack on the west bank. Packenham himself was to superintend the main assault, on the east bank, which was to be made by the British right under General Gibbs, while the left moved forward under General Keane, and General Lambert commanded the reserve.[1] Jackson's [2]

[1] Letter of Major-General John Lambert to Earl Bathurst, January 10, 1815.

[2] 4698 on the east bank, according to the official report of Adjutant-General Robert Butler, for the morning of January 8th. The details are as follows:

At batteries	154
Command of Colonel Ross (671 regulars and 742 Louisiana militia)	1413
Command of General Carroll (Tennesseeans, and somewhat under 500 Kentuckians)	1562
General Coffee's command (Tennesseeans, and about 250 Louisiana militia)	813
Major Hind's dragoons	230
Colonel Slaughter's command	526
Total	4698

These figures tally almost exactly with those given by Major Latour, except that he omits all reference to Colonel Slaughter's command, thus reducing the number to about 4100. Nor can I anywhere find any allusion to Slaughter's command as taking part in the battle; and it is possible that these troops were the 500 Kentuckians ordered across the river by Jackson; in which case his whole force but slightly exceeded 5000 men.

On the west bank there were 546 Louisiana militia—260 of the First Regiment, 176 of the Second, and 110 of the Sixth. Jackson had ordered 500 Kentucky troops to be sent to reinforce them; only 400 started, of whom but 180 had arms. Seventy more received arms from the Naval Arsenal; and thus a total of 250 armed men were added to the 546 already on the west bank.

position was held by a total of 5500 men.[1] Having kept a constant watch on the British, Jackson had rightly concluded that they would make the main attack on the east bank, and had, accordingly, kept the bulk of his force on that side. His works consisted simply of a mud breastwork, with a ditch in front of it, which stretched in a straight line from the river on his right across the plain, and some distance into the morass that sheltered his left. There was a small, unfinished redoubt in front of the breastworks on the river bank. Thirteen pieces of artillery were mounted on the works.[2] On the right was posted the Seventh regular infantry, 430 strong; then came 740 Louisiana militia (both French creoles and men of color, and comprising 30 New Orleans riflemen, who were Americans), and 240 regulars of the Forty-fourth

[1] Two thousand Kentucky militia had arrived, but in wretched plight; only 500 had arms, though pieces were found for about 250 more; and thus Jackson's army received an addition of 750 very badly disciplined soldiers.

"Hardly one third of the Kentucky troops, so long expected, are armed, and the arms they have are not fit for use." (Letter of General Jackson to the Secretary of War, January 3d.)

[2] Almost all British writers underestimate their own force and enormously magnify that of the Americans. Alison, for example, quadruples Jackson's *relative* strength, writing: "About 6000 combatants were on the British side; a slender force to attack double their number, intrenched to the teeth in works bristling with bayonets and loaded with heavy artillery." Instead of double, he should have said half; the bayonets

regiment; while the rest of the line was formed by nearly 500 Kentuckians and over 1600 Tennesseeans, under Carroll and Coffee, with 250 creole militia in the morass on the extreme left, to guard the head of a bayou. In the rear were 230 dragoons, chiefly from Mississippi, and some other troops in reserve; making in all 4700 men on the east bank. The works on the west bank were farther down stream, and were very much weaker. Commodore Patterson had thrown up a water-battery of nine guns, three long 24's and six long 12's, pointing across the river, and intended to take in flank any foe attacking Jackson. This battery was protected by some strong earthworks, mounting three field-pieces, which were thrown up just below it, and stretched from the river about two hundred yards into the plain. The line of defence was extended by a ditch for about a

only "bristled" metaphorically, as less than a quarter of the Americans were armed with them; and the British breaching batteries had a heavier "load" of artillery than did the American lines. Gleig says that, "to come nearer the truth," he "will choose a middle course, and suppose their whole force to be about 25,000 men" (p. 325). Gleig, by the way, in speaking of the battle itself, mentions one most startling evolution of the Americans, namely, that "without so much as lifting their faces above the ramparts, they swung their firelocks by one arm over the wall and discharged them" at the British. If any one will try to perform this feat, with a long, heavy rifle held in one hand, and with his head hid behind a wall, so as not to see the object aimed at, he will get a good idea of the likelihood of any man in his senses attempting it.

quarter of a mile farther, when it ended, and from there to the morass, half a mile distant, there were no defensive works at all. General Morgan, a very poor militia officer,[1] was in command, with a force of 550 Louisiana militia, some of them poorly armed; and on the night before the engagement he was reinforced by 250 Kentuckians, poorly armed, undisciplined, and worn out with fatigue.[2]

All through the night of the 7th a strange murmurous clangor arose from the British camp, and was borne on the moist air to the lines of their slumbering foes. The blows of pickaxe and spade, as the ground was thrown up into batteries by gangs of workmen, the rumble of the artillery as it was placed in position, the measured tread of the battalions as they shifted their places or marched off under Thornton,—all these and the thousand

[1] He committed every possible fault, except showing lack of courage. He placed his works at a very broad instead of at a narrow part of the plain, against the advice of Latour, who had Jackson's approval (Latour, 167). He continued his earthworks but a very short distance inland, making them exceedingly strong in front, and absolutely defenceless on account of their flanks being unprotected. He did not mount the lighter guns of the water-battery on his lines as he ought to have done. Having a force of 800 men, too weak anyhow, he promptly divided it; and, finally, in the fight itself, he stationed a small number of absolutely raw troops in a thin line on the open, with their flank in air; while a much larger number of older troops were kept to defend a much shorter line, behind a strong breastwork, with their flanks covered.

[2] Latour, 170.

other sounds of warlike preparation were softened and blended by the distance into one continuous humming murmur, which struck on the ears of the American sentries with ominous foreboding for the morrow. By midnight Jackson had risen and was getting everything in readiness to hurl back the blow that he rightly judged was soon to fall on his front. Before the dawn broke his soldiery was all on the alert. The bronzed and brawny seamen were grouped in clusters around the great guns. The creole soldiers came of a race whose habit it has ever been to take all phases of life joyously; but that morning their gayety was tempered by a dark undercurrent of fierce anxiety. They had more at stake than any other men on the field. They were fighting for their homes; they were fighting for their wives and their daughters. They well knew that the men they were to face were very brave in battle and very cruel in victory[1]; they well knew the fell destruction and nameless woe that awaited their city should the English take it at the sword's point.

[1] To prove this, it is only needful to quote from the words of the Duke of Wellington himself; referring, it must be remembered, to their conduct in a friendly, not a hostile, country. "It is impossible to describe to you the irregularities and outrages committed by the troops. They are never out of sight of their officers, I might almost say, out of sight of the commanding officers of the regiments, that outrages are not committed. . . . There is not an outrage of any description which has not been committed on a people

They feared not for themselves; but in the hearts of the bravest and most careless there lurked a dull terror of what that day might bring upon those they loved.[1] The Tennesseeans were troubled by no such misgivings. In saturnine,

who have uniformly received them as friends." "I really believe that more plunder and outrages have been committed by this army than by any other that ever was in the field." "A detachment seldom marches . . . that a murder, or a highway robbery, or some act of outrage is not committed by the British soldiers composing it. They have killed eight people since the army returned to Portugal." "They really forget everything when plunder or wine is within reach."

[1] That these fears were just can be seen by the following quotations, from the works of a British officer, General Napier, who was an eye-witness of what he describes. It must be remembered that Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, and San Sebastian were friendly towns, only the garrisons being hostile. "Now commenced that wild and desperate wickedness which tarnished the lustre of the soldiers' heroism. All, indeed, were not alike, for hundreds risked and many lost their lives in striving to stop the violence; but the madness generally prevailed, and as the worst men were leaders here, all the dreadful passions of human nature were displayed. Shameless rapacity, brutal intemperance, savage lust, cruelty and murder, shrieks and piteous lamentations, groans, shouts, imprecations, the hissing of fires bursting from the houses, the crashing of doors and windows, the reports of muskets used in violence, resounded for two days and nights in the streets of Badajos. On the third, when the city was sacked, when the soldiers were exhausted by their own excesses, the tumult rather subsided than was quelled." (Vol. iii., 377.) And again: "This storm seemed to be a signal from hell for the perpetration of villainy which would have shamed the most ferocious barbarians of antiquity. At Rodrigo intoxication and plunder had been the principal object; at Badajos

confident silence they lolled behind their mud walls, or, leaning on their long rifles, peered out into the gray fog with savage, reckless eyes. So, hour after hour, the two armies stood facing each other in the darkness, waiting for the light of day.

lust and murder were joined to rapine and drunkenness; but at San Sebastian the direst, the most revolting cruelty was added to the catalogue of crimes—one atrocity, of which a girl of seventeen was the victim, staggers the mind by its enormous, incredible, indescribable barbarity . . . a Portuguese adjutant, who endeavored to prevent some wickedness, was put to death in the market-place, not with sudden violence from a single ruffian, but deliberately, by a number of English soldiers . . . and the disorder continued until the flames, following the steps of the plunderer, put an end to his ferocity by destroying the whole town." Packenham himself would have certainly done all in his power to prevent excesses, and has been foully slandered by many early American writers. Alluding to these, Napier remarks, somewhat caustically: "Pre-eminently distinguished for detestation of inhumanity and outrage, he has been, with astounding falsehood, represented as instigating his troops to the most infamous excesses; but from a people holding millions of their fellow-beings in the most horrible slavery, while they prate and vaunt of liberty until all men turn in loathing from the sickening folly, what can be expected? (Vol. v., p. 31.) Napier possessed to a very eminent degree the virtue of being plain-spoken. Elsewhere (iii., p. 450), after giving a most admirably fair and just account of the origin of the Anglo-American War, he alludes, with a good deal of justice, to the Americans of 1812, as "a people who (notwithstanding the curse of black slavery which clings to them, adding the most horrible ferocity to the peculiar baseness of their mercantile spirit, and rendering their republican vanity ridiculous) do, in their general government, uphold civil institutions which have startled the crazy despotisms of Europe."

At last the sun rose, and as its beams struggled through the morning mist they glinted on the sharp steel bayonets of the English, where their scarlet ranks were drawn up in battle array, but four hundred yards from the American breastworks. There stood the matchless infantry of the island king, in the pride of their strength and the splendor of their martial glory; and, as the haze cleared away, they moved forward, in stern silence, broken only by the angry, snarling notes of the brazen bugles. At once the American artillery leaped into furious life; and, ready and quick, the more numerous cannon of the invaders responded from their hot, feverish lips. Unshaken amid the tumult of that iron storm, the heavy red column moved steadily on toward the left of the American line, where the Tennesseeans were standing in motionless, grim expectancy. Three fourths of the open space was crossed, and the eager soldiers broke into a run. Then a fire of hell smote the British column. From the breastwork in front of them the white smoke curled thick into the air, as rank after rank the wild marksmen of the backwoods rose and fired, aiming low and sure. As stubble is withered by flame, so withered the British column under that deadly fire; and, aghast at the slaughter, the reeling files staggered and gave back. Packenham, fit captain for his valorous host, rode to the front, and the troops, rallying

round him, sprang forward with ringing cheers. But once again the pealing rifle-blast beat in their faces; and the life of their dauntless leader went out before its scorching and fiery breath. With him fell the other general who was with the column and all of the men who were leading it on; and, as a last resource, Keane brought up his stalwart Highlanders; but in vain the stubborn mountaineers rushed on, only to die as their comrades had died before them, with unconquerable courage, facing the foe to the last. Keane himself was struck down; and the shattered wrecks of the British column, quailing before certain destruction, turned and sought refuge beyond reach of the leaden death that had overwhelmed their comrades. Nor did it fare better with the weaker force that was to assail the right of the American line. This was led by the dashing Colonel Rennie who, when the confusion caused by the main attack was at its height, rushed forward with impetuous bravery along the river bank. With such headlong fury did he make the assault, that the rush of his troops took the outlying redoubt, whose defenders, regulars and artillerymen, fought to the last with their bayonets and clubbed muskets, and were butchered to a man. Without delay, Rennie flung his men at the breastworks behind, and, gallantly leading them, sword in hand, he and all around him fell, riddled through and

through by the balls of the riflemen. Brave though they were, the British soldiers could not stand against the singing, leaden hail, for if they stood it was but to die. So in rout and wild dismay they fled back along the river bank to the main army. For some time afterward the British artillery kept up its fire, but was gradually silenced, and the repulse was entire and complete along the whole line; nor did the cheering news of success brought from the west bank give any hope to the British commanders, stunned by their crushing overthrow.[1]

Meanwhile, Colonel Thornton's attack on the opposite side had been successful, but had been de-

[1] According to their official returns, the British loss was 2036; the American accounts, of course, make it much greater. Latour is the only trustworthy American contemporary historian of this war, and even he at times absurdly exaggerates the British force and loss. Most of the other American "histories" of that period were the most preposterously bombastic works that ever saw print. But as regards this battle, none of them are as bad as even such British historians as Alison; the exact reverse being the case in many other battles, notably Lake Erie. The devices each author adopts to lessen the seeming force of his side are generally of much the same character. For instance, Latour says that 800 of Jackson's men were employed on works at the rear, on guard duty, etc., and deducts them; James, for precisely similar reasons, deducts 853 men: by such means, one reduces Jackson's total force to 4000, and the other gives Packenham but 7300. Only 2000 Americans were actually engaged on the east banks.

layed beyond the originally intended hour. The sides of the canal by which the boats were to be brought through to the Mississippi caved in and choked the passage,[1] so that only enough got through to take over a half of Thornton's force. With these, seven hundred in number,[2] he crossed, but as he did not allow for the current, it carried him down about two miles below the proper landing place. Meanwhile, General Morgan, having under him eight hundred militia,[3] whom it was of the utmost importance to have kept together, promptly divided them and sent three hundred of the rawest and most poorly armed down to meet the enemy in the open. The inevitable result was their immediate rout and dispersion; about one hundred got back to Morgan's lines. He then had six hundred men, all militia, to oppose to seven hundred regulars. So he stationed the four hundred best disciplined men to defend the two hundred yards of strong breastworks, mounting three guns, which covered his left, while the two hundred worst disciplined were placed to guard six hundred yards of open ground on his right, with their flank resting

[1] Codrington, i., 386.

[2] James says 298 soldiers and about 200 sailors; but Admiral Cochrane in his letter (January 18th) says 600 men, half sailors; and Admiral Codrington also (p. 335) gives this number, 300 being sailors. Adding 13½ per cent. for the officers, sergeants, and trumpeters, we get 680 men.

[3] 796. (Latour, 164–172.)

in air, and entirely unprotected.[1] This truly phenomenal arrangement ensured beforehand the certain defeat of his troops, no matter how well they fought; but, as it turned out, they hardly fought at all. Thornton, pushing up the river, first attacked the breastwork in front, but was checked by a hot fire; deploying his men, he then sent a strong force to march round and take Morgan on his exposed right flank.[2] There, the already demoralized Kentucky militia, extended in thin order across an open space, outnumbered, and taken in flank by regular troops, were stampeded at once, and after firing a single volley they took to their heels.[3] This exposed the flank of the better disciplined creoles, who were also put to flight, but they kept some order and were soon rallied.[4] In bitter rage Patterson spiked the guns of his water-battery and marched off with his sailors, un-

[1] Report of Court of Inquiry, Major-General William Carroll presiding.

[2] Letter of Col. W. Thornton, January 8, 1815.

[3] Letter of Commodore Patterson, January 13, 1815.

[4] Alison outdoes himself in recounting this feat. Having reduced the British force to 340 men, he says they captured the redoubt, "though defended by 22 guns and 1700 men." Of course, it was physically impossible for the water-battery to take part in the defence; so there were but three guns, and by halving the force on one side and trebling it on the other, he makes the relative strength of the Americans just sixfold what it was,—and is faithfully followed by other British writers

molested. The American loss had been slight, and that of their opponents not heavy, though among their dangerously wounded was Colonel Thornton.

This success, though a brilliant one, and a disgrace to the American arms, had no effect on the battle. Jackson at once sent over reinforcements under the famous French general, Humbert, and preparations were forthwith made to retake the lost position. But it was already abandoned, and the force that had captured it had been recalled by Lambert, when he found that the place could not be held without additional troops.[1] The total British loss on both sides of the river amounted to over two thousand men, the vast majority of whom had fallen in the attack on the Tennesseeans, and most of the remainder in the attack made by Colonel Rennie. The Americans had lost but seventy men, of whom but thirteen fell in the main attack. On the east bank, neither the creole militia nor the Forty-fourth regiment had taken any part in the combat.

The English had thrown for high stakes and had lost everything, and they knew it. There

[1] The British Colonel Dickson, who had been sent over to inspect, reported that 2000 men would be needed to hold the battery; so Lambert ordered the British to retire. (Lambert's letter, January 10th.)

was nothing to hope for left. Nearly a fourth of their fighting men had fallen; and among the officers the proportion was far larger. Of their four generals, Packenham was dead, Gibbs dying, Keane disabled, and only Lambert left. Their leader, their ablest officers, and all the flower of their bravest men were lying, stark and dead, on the bloody plain before them; and their bodies were doomed to crumble into mouldering dust on the green fields where they had fought and had fallen. It was useless to make another trial. They had learned, to their bitter cost, that no troops, however steady, could advance over open ground against such a fire as came from Jackson's lines. Their artillerymen had three times tried conclusions with the American gunners, and each time they had been forced to acknowledge themselves worsted. They would never have another chance to repeat their flank attack, for Jackson had greatly strengthened and enlarged the works on the west bank, and had seen that they were fully manned and ably commanded. Moreover, no sooner had the assault failed than the Americans again began their old harassing warfare. The heaviest cannon, both from the breastwork and the water-battery, played on the British camp, both night and day, giving the army no rest, and the mounted riflemen kept up a trifling but in-

cessant and annoying skirmishing with their pickets and outposts.

The British could not advance, and it was worse than useless for them to stay where they were, for though they, from time to time, were reinforced, yet Jackson's forces augmented faster than theirs, and every day lessened the numerical inequality between the two armies. There was but one thing left to do, and that was to retreat. They had no fear of being attacked in turn. The British soldiers were made of too good stuff to be in the least cowed or cast down even by such a slaughtering defeat as that they had just suffered, and nothing would have given them keener pleasure than to have had a fair chance at their adversaries in the open; but this chance was just what Jackson had no idea of giving them. His own army, though in part as good as an army could be, consisted also in part of untrained militia, while not a quarter of his men had bayonets; and the wary old chief, for all his hardihood, had far too much wit to hazard such a force in fight with a superior number of seasoned veterans, thoroughly equipped, unless on his own ground and in his own manner. So he contented himself with keeping a sharp watch on Lambert; and, on the night of January 18th, the latter deserted his position, and made a very skilful and rapid retreat, leaving eighty wounded men

and fourteen pieces of cannon behind him.[1] A few stragglers were captured on land, and, while the troops were embarking, a number of barges, with over a hundred prisoners, were cut out by some American seamen in row-boats; but the bulk of the army reached the transports unmolested. At the same time, a squadron of vessels, which had been unsuccessfully bombarding Fort Saint Philip for a week or two, and had been finally driven off when the fort got a mortar large enough to reach them with, also returned; and the whole fleet set sail for Mobile. The object was to capture Fort Boyer, which contained less than four hundred men, and, though formidable on its sea-front,[2] was incapable of de-

[1] Letter of General Jackson, January 19th, and of General Lambert, January 28th.

[2] "Towards the sea its fortifications are respectable enough; but on the land side it is little better than a block-house. The ramparts being composed of sand not more than three feet in thickness, and faced with plank, are barely cannon-proof; while a sand hill, rising within pistol-shot of the ditch, completely commands it. Within, again, it is as much wanting in accommodation as it is in strength. There are no bomb-proof barracks, nor any hole or arch under which men might find protection from shells; indeed, so deficient is it in common lodging-rooms, that great part of the garrison sleep in tents. . . . With the reduction of this trifling work all hostilities ended." (Gleig, 357.)

General Jackson impliedly censures the garrison for surrendering so quickly; but in such a fort it was absolutely impossible to act otherwise, and not the slightest stain rests upon the fort's defenders.

fence when regularly attacked on its land side. The British landed, February 8th, some 1500 men, broke ground, and made approaches; for four days the work went on amid a continual fire, which killed or wounded 11 Americans and 31 British; by that time the battering-guns were in position and the fort capitulated, February 12th, the garrison marching out with the honors of war. Immediately afterward, the news of peace arrived, and all hostilities terminated.

In spite of the last trifling success, the campaign had been to the British both bloody and disastrous. It did not affect the results of the war, and the decisive battle itself was a perfectly useless shedding of blood, for peace had been declared before it was fought. Nevertheless, it was not only glorious but profitable to the United States. Louisiana was saved from being severely ravaged, and New Orleans from possible destruction; and after our humiliating defeats in trying to repel the invasion of Virginia and Maryland, the signal victory of New Orleans was really almost a necessity for the preservation of the national honor. This campaign was the great event of the war, and in it was fought the most important battle as regards numbers that took place during the entire struggle; and the fact that we were victorious not only saved our self-respect at home, but also gave us a prestige abroad which

we should otherwise have totally lacked. It could not be said to entirely balance the numerous defeats that we had elsewhere suffered on land,—defeats which had so far only been offset by Harrison's victory in 1813 and the campaign in Lower Canada in 1814,—but it at any rate went a long way toward making the score even.

Jackson is certainly by all odds the most prominent figure that appeared during this war, and stands head and shoulders above any other commander, American or British, that it produced.

It will be difficult, in all history, to show a parallel to the feat that he performed. In three weeks' fighting, with a force largely composed of militia, he utterly defeated and drove away an army twice the size of his own, composed of veteran troops, and led by one of the ablest of European generals. During the whole campaign he only erred once, and that was in putting General Morgan, a very incompetent officer, in command of the forces on the west bank. He suited his movements admirably to the various exigencies that arose. The promptness and skill with which he attacked, as soon as he knew of the near approach of the British, undoubtedly saved the city; for their vanguard was so roughly handled that, instead of being able to advance at once, they were forced to delay three

days, during which time Jackson intrenched himself in a position from which he was never driven. But after this first attack, the offensive would have been not only hazardous, but useless, and accordingly Jackson, adopting that mode of warfare which best suited the ground he was on and the troops he had under him, forced the enemy always to fight him where he was strongest, and confined himself strictly to the pure defensive—a system condemned by most European authorities,[1] but which has at times succeeded to admiration in America, as witness Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Kenesaw Mountain, and Franklin. Moreover, it must be remembered that Jackson's success was in nowise owing either to chance or to the errors of his adversary.[2] As far as fortune favored either side, it was that of the

[1] Thus Napier says (vol. v., p. 25): "Soult fared as most generals will who seek by extensive lines to supply the want of numbers or of hardiness in the troops. Against rude commanders and undisciplined soldiers, lines may avail; seldom against accomplished commanders, never when the assailants are the better soldiers." And again (p. 150): "Offensive operations must be the basis of a good defensive system."

[2] The reverse has been stated again and again, with very great injustice, not only by British, but even by American writers (as, *e. g.*, Prof. W. G. Sumner, in his *Andrew Jackson as a Public Man*, Boston, 1882). The climax of absurdity is reached by Major McDougal, who says (as quoted by Cole in his *Memoirs of British Generals*, ii., p. 364): "Sir Edward Packenham fell, not after an utter and disastrous defeat, but at the very moment when the arms of victory were extended

British[1]; and Packenham left nothing undone to accomplish his aim, and made no movements that his experience in European war did not justify his making. There is not the slightest reason for supposing that any other British general would have accomplished more or have fared better than he did.[2] Of course, Jackson owed much to the nature of the ground on which he fought; but the opportunities it afforded would have been useless

towards him"; and by James, who says (ii., 388): "The premature fall of a British general saved an American city." These assertions are just on a par with those made by American writers, that only the fall of Lawrence prevented the *Chesapeake* from capturing the *Shannon*.

British writers have always attributed the defeat largely to the fact that the 44th regiment, which was to have led the attack with fascines and ladders, did not act well. I doubt if this had any effect on the result. Some few of the men with ladders did reach the ditch, but were shot down at once, and their fate would have been shared by any others who had been with them; the bulk of the column was never able to advance through the fire up to the breastwork, and all the ladders and fascines in Christendom would not have helped it. There will always be innumerable excuses offered for any defeat; but on this occasion the truth is simply that the British regulars found they could not advance in the open against a fire more deadly than they had ever before encountered.

[1] *E. g.:* The unexpected frost made the swamps firm for them to advance through; the river being so low when the levee was cut, the bayous were filled, instead, of the British being drowned out; the *Carolina* was only blown up because the wind happened to fail her; bad weather delayed the advance of arms and reinforcements, etc.

[2] "He was the next man to look to after Lord Wellington" (Codrington, i., 339).

in the hands of any general less ready, hardy, and skilful than Old Hickory.

A word as to the troops themselves. The British infantry was at that time the best in Europe, the French coming next. Packenham's soldiers had formed part of Wellington's magnificent Peninsular army, and they lost nothing of their honor at New Orleans. Their conduct throughout was admirable. Their steadiness in the night battle, their patience through the various hardships they had to undergo, their stubborn courage in action, and the undaunted front they showed in time of disaster (for at the very end they were to the full as ready and eager to fight as at the beginning), all showed that their soldierly qualities were of the highest order. As much cannot be said of the British artillery, which, though very bravely fought was clearly by no means as skilfully handled as was the case with the American guns. The courage of the British officers of all arms is mournfully attested by the sadly large proportion they bore to the total on the lists of the killed and wounded.

An even greater meed of praise is due to the American soldiers, for it must not be forgotten that they were raw troops opposed to veterans; and, indeed, nothing but Jackson's tireless care in drilling them could have brought them into shape at all. The regulars were just as good

as the British, and no better. The Kentucky militia, who had only been 48 hours with the army and were badly armed and totally undisciplined, proved as useless as their brethren of New York and Virginia, at Queenstown Heights and Bladensburg, had previously shown themselves to be. They would not stand in the open at all, and even behind a breastwork had to be mixed with better men. The Louisiana militia, fighting in defence of their homes, and well trained, behaved excellently, and behind breastworks were as formidable as the regulars. The Tennesseeans, good men to start with, and already well trained in actual warfare under Jackson, were in their own way unsurpassable as soldiers. In the open field the British regulars, owing to their greater skill in manœuvring, and to their having bayonets, with which the Tennesseeans were unprovided, could in all likelihood have beaten them; but in rough or broken ground the skill of the Tennesseeans, both as marksmen and woodsmen, would probably have given them the advantage; while the extreme deadliness of their fire made it far more dangerous to attempt to storm a breastwork guarded by these forest riflemen than it would have been to attack the same work guarded by an equal number of the best regular troops of Europe. The American soldiers deserve great credit for doing so well; but

greater credit still belongs to Andrew Jackson, who, with his cool head and quick eye, his stout heart and strong hand, stands out in history as the ablest general the United States produced, from the outbreak of the Revolution down to the beginning of the Great Rebellion.

APPENDIX A

TONNAGE OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN MEN-OF-WAR IN 1812–15

ACCORDING to Act of Congress (quoted in Niles's *Register*, iv., 64), the way of measuring double-decked or war vessels was as follows:

"Measure from fore-part of main stem to after-part of stern-port, above the upper deck; take the breadth thereof at broadest part above the main wales, one half of which breadth shall be accounted the depth. Deduct from the length three fifths of such breadth, multiply the remainder by the breadth and the product by the depth; divide by 95; the quotient is tonnage."

(*i. e.*, If length = x, and breadth = y;

$$\text{Tonnage} = \frac{(x - \frac{3}{5}y) \times y \times \frac{1}{2}y}{95}.)$$

Niles states that the British mode, as taken from Steele's *Shipmaster's Assistant*, was this: Drop plumb-line over stem of ship and measure distance between such line and the after part of the stern-port at the load water-mark; then measure from top of said plumb-line in parallel direction

with the water to perpendicular point immediately over the load water-mark of the fore-part of main stem; subtract from such admeasurement the above distance; the remainder is ship's extreme length, from which deduct 3 inches for every foot of the load-draught of water for the rake abaft, and also three fifths of the ship's breadth for the rake forward; remainder is length of keel for tonnage. Breadth shall be taken from outside to outside of the plank in broadest part of the ship either above or below the main wales, exclusive of all manner of sheathing or doubling. Depth is to be considered as one half the length. Tonnage will then be the length into the depth into breadth, divided by 94.

Tonnage was thus estimated in a purely arbitrary manner, with no regard to actual capacity or displacement; and, moreover, what is of more importance, British method differed from the American so much that a ship measured in the latter way would be nominally about 15 per cent. larger than if measured by British rules. This is the exact reverse of the statement made by the British naval historian, James. His mistake is pardonable, for great confusion existed on the subject at that time, even the officers not knowing the tonnage of their own ships. When the *President* was captured, her officers stated that she measured about 1400 tons; in reality, she measured

1576, American measure. Still more singular was the testimony of the officers of the *Argus*, who thought her to be of about 350 tons, while she was of 298, by American, or 244, by British measurement. These errors were the more excusable as they occurred also in higher quarters. The earliest notice we have about the three 44-gun frigates of the *Constitution's* class, is in the letter of Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddart, on December 24, 1798,[1] where they are expressly said to be of 1576 tons; and this tonnage is given them in every navy list that mentions it for 40 years afterwards; yet Secretary Paul Hamilton, in one of his letters, incidentally alludes to them as of 1444 tons. Later, I think about the year 1838, the method of measuring was changed, and their tonnage was put down as 1607. James takes the American tonnage from Secretary Hamilton's letter as 1444, and states (vol. vi., p. 5) that this is equivalent to 1533 tons English. But, in reality, by American measurement, the tonnage was 1576; so that, even according to James's own figures, the British way of measurement made the frigate 43 tons smaller than the American way did; actually the difference was nearer 290 tons. James's statements as to the size of our various ships would seem to have been largely mere guesswork, as he sometimes makes them smaller and

[1] *American State Papers*, xiv., 57.

sometimes larger than they were according to the official navy lists. Thus, the *Constitution*, *President*, and *United States*, each of 1576, he puts down as of 1533; the *Wasp*, of 450, as of 434; the *Hornet*, of 480, as of 460; and the *Chesapeake*, of 1244, as of 1135 tons. On the other hand, the *Enterprise*, of 165 tons, he states to be of 245; the *Argus*, of 298, he considers to be of 316, and the *Peacock*, *Frolic*, etc., of 509 each, as of 539. He thus certainly adopts different standards of measurement, not only for the American as distinguished from the British vessels, but even among the various American vessels themselves. And there are other difficulties to be encountered: not only were there different ways of casting tonnage from given measurements, but also there were different ways of getting what purported to be the same measurement. A ship that, according to the British method of measurement was of a certain length, would, according to the American method, be about 5 per cent. longer; and so, if two vessels were the same size, the American would have the greatest nominal tonnage. For example, James, in his *Naval Occurrences* (p. 467), gives the length of the *Cyane's* main-deck as 118 feet 2 inches. This same *Cyane* was carefully surveyed and measured, under orders from the United States navy department, by Lieut. B. F. Hoffman, and in his

published report[1] he gives, among the other dimensions: "Length of spar-deck, 124 feet 9 inches," and "length of gun-deck, 123 feet 3 inches." With such a difference in the way of taking measurements, as well as of computing tonnage from the measurements when taken, it is not surprising that, according to the American method, the *Cyane* should have ranked as of about 659 tons, instead of 539. As James takes no account of any of these differences I hardly know how to treat his statements of comparative tonnage. Thus, he makes the *Hornet* 460 tons, and the *Peacock* and *Penguin*, which she at different times captured, about 388 each. As it happens, both Captain Lawrence and Captain Biddle, who commanded the *Hornet* in her two successful actions, had their prizes measured. The *Peacock* sank so rapidly that Lawrence could not get very accurate measurements of her; he states her to be four feet shorter and a half foot broader than the *Hornet*. The British naval historian, Brenton (vol. v., p. 111), also states that they were of about the same tonnage. But we have more satisfactory evidence from Captain Biddle. He stayed by his prize nearly two days, and had her thoroughly examined in every way; and his testimony is, of course, final. He reports that the *Penguin*

[1] *American State Papers*, xiv., p. 417.

was by actual measurement two feet shorter and somewhat broader than the *Hornet*, and with thicker scantling. She tonned 477, compared to the *Hornet's* 480—a difference of about one half of one per cent. This testimony is corroborated by that of the naval inspectors who examined the *Epervier* after she was captured by the *Peacock*. Those two vessels were, respectively, of 477 and 509 tons, and as such they ranked on the navy lists. The American *Peacock* and her sister ships were very much longer than the brig-sloops of the *Epervier's* class, but were no broader, the latter being very tubby. All the English sloops were broader in proportion than the American ones were; thus, the *Levant*, which was to have mounted the same number of guns as the *Peacock*, had much more beam, and was of greater tonnage, although of rather less length. The *Macedonian*, when captured, ranked on our lists as of 1325 tons,[1] the *United States* as of 1576; and they thus continued until, as I have said before, the method of measurement was changed, when the former ranked as of 1341, and the latter as of 1607 tons. James, however, makes them, respectively, 1081 and 1533. Now, to get the comparative force, he ought to have adopted the first set of measurements given,

[1] See the work of Lieutenant Emmons, who had access to all the official records.

or else have made them 1081 and 1286. Out of the twelve single-ship actions of the war, four were fought with 38-gun frigates like the *Macedonian*, and seven with 18-gun brig-sloops of the *Epervier's* class; and, as the *Macedonian* and *Epervier* were both regularly rated in our navy, we get a very exact idea of our antagonists in those eleven cases. The twelfth was the fight between the *Enterprise* and the *Boxer*, in which the latter was captured; the *Enterprise* was apparently a little smaller than her foe, but had two more guns, which she carried in her bridle-ports.

As my purpose in giving the tonnage is to get it comparatively, and not absolutely, I have given it throughout for both sides as estimated by the American method of that day. The tonnage of the vessels on the lakes has been already noticed.

APPENDIX B

PREVIOUS HISTORY OF UNITED STATES NAVY

Very few students of naval history will deny that in 1812 the average American ship was superior to the average British ship of the same strength; and that the latter was, in turn, superior to the average French ship. The explanation given by the victor is in each case the same: the American writer ascribes the success

of his nation to "the aptitude of the American character for the sea," and the Briton similarly writes that the "English are inherently better suited for the sea than the French." Race characteristics may have had some little effect between the last pair of combatants (although only a little), and it is *possible* that they somewhat affected the outcome of the Anglo-American struggle, but they did not form the main cause. This can best be proved by examining the combats of two preceding periods in which the English, French, and Americans were at war with one another.

During the years 1798–1800, the United States carried on a desultory conflict with France, then at war with England. Our navy was just built, and was rated in the most extraordinary manner: the *Chesapeake*, carrying 18-pounders, was called a 44; and the *Constellation*, which carried 24's, a 36; while the *Washington*, rating 24, was really much heavier than the *Boston*, rating 28. On February 9, 1799, after an hour's conflict, the *Constellation* captured the French frigate *L'Insurgente;* the Americans lost 3, the French 70 men, killed and wounded. The *Constellation* carried but 38 guns; twenty-eight long 24's, on the main-deck, and ten long 12's on the quarter-deck, with a crew of 309 men. According to Troude (iii., 169), *L'Insurgente* carried twenty-six

long 12's, ten long 6's, and four 36-pound carronades; the Americans report her number of men as nearly four hundred. Thus, in actual[1] (not nominal) weight of shot the *Constellation* was superior by about 80 pounds, and was inferior in crew by from 50 to 100 men. This would make the vessels apparently nearly equal in force; but, of course, the long 24's of the *Constellation* made it impossible that *L'Insurgente*, armed only with long 12's, should contend with her. As already said, a superiority in number of men makes very little difference, provided each vessel has ample to handle the guns, repair damages, work the sails, etc. Troude goes more into details than any other French historian; but I think his details are generally wrong. In this case he gives the *Constellation* 12's instead of the 24's she really carried; and also supplies her with ten 32-pound carronades —of which species of ordnance there was then not one piece in our navy. The first carronades

[1] French shot was really very much heavier than the nominally corresponding English shot, as the following table taken from Capt. T. L. Simmons's work on *Heavy Ordnance* (London, 1837, p. 62) will show:

Nominal French Weight of Shot	Actual Weight of Same Shot in English Pounds
36 lbs.	43 lbs. 4 oz.
24 "	28 " 8½ "
18 "	21 " 4½ "
12 "	14 " 7 "

we ever had were those carried by the same frigate on her next voyage. She had completely changed her armament, having twenty-eight long 18's on the main-deck, ten 24-pound carronades on the quarter-deck; and, I believe, six long 12's on the forecastle, with a crew of 310 men. Thus armed, she encountered and fought a drawn battle with *La Vengeance*. Troude (vol. iii., pp. 201 and 216) describes the armament of the latter as twenty-six long 18's, ten long 8's, and four 36-pound carronades. On board of her was an American prisoner, James Howe, who swore she had 52 guns and 400 men (see Cooper, i., 306). The French and American accounts thus radically disagree. The point is settled definitely by the report of the British captain, Milne, who, in the *Seine*, frigate, captured *La Vengeance* in the same year, and then reported her armament as being twenty-eight long 18's, sixteen long 12's, and eight 36-pound carronades, with 326 men. As the American and British accounts, written entirely independent of one another, tally almost exactly, it is evident that Troude was very greatly mistaken. He blunders very much over the *Constellation's* armament.

Thus, in this action, the American frigate fought a draw with an antagonist nearly as much superior to herself as an American 44 was to a British 38. In November, 1800, the "28-gun frigate," *Boston*, of 530 tons, 200 men, carrying twenty-four

long 9's on the main-deck, and on the spar-deck eight long 6's (or possibly 12-pound carronades) captured, after two hours' action, the French corvette *Berceau*, of 24 guns, long 8's; the *Boston* was about the same size as her foe, with the same number of men, and superior in metal about as 10 to 9. She lost 15, and the *Berceau* 40, men. Troude (iii., p. 219) gives the *Berceau* 30 guns, twenty-two long 8's, and eight 12-pound carronades. If this is true, she was in reality of equal force with the *Boston*. But I question if Troude really knew anything about the combatants; he gives the *Boston* (of the same size and build as the *Cyane*) 48 guns—a number impossible for her to carry. He continually makes the grossest errors; in this same (the third) volume, for example, he arms a British 50-gun ship with 72 cannon, giving her a broadside fifty per cent. heavier than it should be (p. 141); and, still worse, states the ordinary complement of a British 32-gun frigate to be 384 men, instead of about 220 (p. 417). He is by no means as trustworthy as James, though less rancorous.

The United States schooner *Experiment*, of 12 guns, long 6's, and 70 men, captured the French man-of-war three-masted schooner *La Diane*, of 14 guns (either 4- or 6-pounders), with a crew of 60 men, and 30 passengers; and the *Enterprise*, the sister vessel of the *Experiment*,

captured numerous strong privateers. One of them, a much heavier vessel than her captor, made a most obstinate fight. She was the *Flambeau*, brig, of fourteen 8-pounders and 100 men, of whom half were killed or wounded. The *Enterprise* had 3 killed and 7 wounded.

Comparing these different actions, it is evident that the Americans were superior to the French in fighting capacity during the years 1799 and 1800. During the same two years there had been numerous single contests between vessels of Britain and France, ending almost invariably in favor of the former, which I mention first in each couple. The 12-pounder frigate *Dædalus* captured the 12-pounder frigate *Prudente*, of equal force. The 18-pounder frigate *Sybille* captured the frigate *Forte*, armed with 52 guns, thirty of them long 24's on the main-deck; she was formidably armed and as heavy as the *Constitution*. The *Sybille* lost 22, and the *Forte* 145, men killed and wounded. The 18-pounder frigate *Clyde*, with the loss of 5 men, captured the 12-pounder frigate *Vestale*, which lost 32. The cutter *Courser*, of twelve 4-pounders and 40 men, captured the privateer *Guerrière*, of fourteen 4-pounders and 44 men. The cutter *Viper*, of fourteen 4-pounders and 48 men, captured the privateer *Suret*, of fourteen 4-pounders and 57 men. The 16-gun ship-sloop *Peterel*, with 89 men, engaged the *Cerf*, 14,

Lejoille, 6, and *Ligurienne*, 16, with, in all, 240 men, and captured the *Ligurienne*. The 30-gun corvette *Dart* captured by surprise the 38-gun frigate *Desirée*. The *Gypsy*, of ten 4-pounders and 82 men, captured the *Quidproquo*, of eight guns, 4- and 8-pounders, and 98 men. The schooner *Milbrook*, of sixteen 18-pound carronades and 47 men, fought a draw with the privateer *Bellone*, of 24 long 8's and six 36-pound carronades. Finally, six months after *La Vengeance* had escaped from the *Constellation* (or beaten her off, as the French say), she was captured by the British frigate *Seine*, which threw a broadside about 30 pounds more than the American did in her action, and had some 29 men less aboard. So that her commander, Captain Milne, with the same force as Commodore Truxton, of the *Constellation*, accomplished what the latter failed to do.

Reviewing all these actions, it seems pretty clear that, while the Americans were then undoubtedly much superior to the French, they were still, at least slightly, inferior to the British.

From 1777 to 1782, the state of things was very different. The single combats were too numerous for me to mention them here; and, besides, it would be impossible to get at the truth without going to a great deal of trouble —the accounts given by Cooper, Schomberg, and

Troude differing so widely that they can often hardly be recognized as treating of the same events. But it is certain that the British were very much superior to the Americans. Some of the American ships behaved most disgracefully, deserting their consorts and fleeing from much smaller foes. Generally, the American ship was captured when opposed by an equal force—although there were some brilliant exceptions to this. With the French, things were more equal; their frigates were sunk or captured time and again, but nearly as often they sunk or captured their antagonists. Some of the most gallant fights on record are recounted of French frigates of this period; in 1781, the *Minerve*, 32, resisted the *Courageous*, 74, till she had lost 73 men and had actually inflicted a loss of 17 men on her gigantic antagonist, and the previous year the *Bellepoule*, 32, had performed a similar feat with the *Nonsuch*, 64, while the *Capricieuse*, 32, had fought for five hours before surrendering to the *Prudente* and *Licorne*, each of force equal to herself. She lost 100 men, inflicting a loss of 55 upon her two antagonists. Such instances make us feel rather ashamed when we compare them with the fight in which the British ship *Glasgow*, 20, beat off an American squadron of 5 ships, including two of equal force to herself, or with the time when the *Ariadne*, 20, and *Ceres*, 14, at-

tacked and captured without resistance the *Alfred*, 20, the latter ship being deserted in the most outrageously cowardly manner by her consort, the *Raleigh*, 32. At that period, the average American ship was certainly by no means equal to the average French ship of the same force, and the latter, in turn, was a little, but only a little, inferior to the average British ship of equal strength.

Thus, in 1782, the British stood first in nautical prowess, separated but by a very narrow interval from the French, while the Americans made a bad third. In 1789, the British still stood first, while the Americans had made a great stride forward, coming close on their heels, and the French had fallen far behind into the third place. In 1812, the relative positions of the British and French were unchanged, but the Americans had taken another very decided step in advance, and stood nearly as far ahead of the British as the latter were ahead of the French.

The explanation of these changes is not difficult. In 1782, the American war vessels were in reality privateers; the crews were unpractised, the officers untrained, and they had none of the traditions and discipline of a regular service. At the same time the French marine was at its highest point; it was commanded by officers of ability and experience, promoted largely for merit, and with crews thoroughly trained especially,

in gunnery, by a long course of service on the sea. In courage, and in skill in the management of guns, musketry, etc., they were the full equals of their English antagonists; their slight *average* inferiority in seamanship may, it is possible, be fairly put down to the difference in race. (It seems certain that, when serving in a neutral vessel, for example, the Englishmen aboard are apt to make better sailors than the Frenchmen.) In 1799, the revolution had deprived the French of all their best officers, had let the character of the marine run down and the discipline of the service become utterly disorganized; this exposed them to frightful reverses, and these, in turn, prevented the character of the service from recovering its former tone. Meanwhile, the Americans had established for the first time a regular navy, and, as there was excellent material to work with, it at once came up close to the English; constant and arduous service, fine discipline, promotion for merit, and the most unflagging attention to practical seamanship and gunnery, had, in 1812, raised it far above even the high English standard. During all these three periods the English marine, it must be remembered, did not fall off, but at least kept its position; the French, on the contrary, *did* fall off, while the American navy advanced, by great strides, to the first place.

APPENDIX C

After my work was in press I, for the first time, came across Prof. J. Russell Soley's *Naval Campaign of 1812*, in the "Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute," for October 20, 1881. It is, apparently, the precursor of a more extended history. Had I known that such a writer as Professor Soley was engaged on a work of this kind, I certainly should not have attempted it myself.

In several points our accounts differ. In the action with the *Guerrière* his diagram differs from mine, chiefly in his making the *Constitution* steer in a more direct line, while I have represented her as shifting her course several times in order to avoid being raked, bringing the wind first on her port and then on her starboard quarter. My account of the number of the crew of the *Guerrière* is taken from the *Constitution's* muster book (in the Treasury Department at Washington), which contains the names of all the British prisoners received aboard the *Constitution* after the fight. The various writers used "larboard" and "starboard" with such perfect indifference, in speaking of the closing and the loss of the *Guerrière's* mizzenmast, that I hardly knew which account to adopt; it finally seemed to me that the only way to reconcile the conflicting statements

was by making the mast act as a rudder, first to keep the ship off the wind until it was dead aft and then to bring her up into it. If this was the case, it deadened her speed, and prevented Dacres from keeping his ship yard-arm and yard-arm with the foe, though he tried to steady his course with the helm; but, in this view, it rather delayed Hull's raking than helped him. If Professor Soley's account is right, I hardly know what to make of the statement in one of the American accounts that the *Constitution* "luffed across the enemy's bow," and of Cooper's statement (in *Putnam's Magazine*) that the *Guerrière's* bowsprit pressed against the *Constitution's* "lee or port quarter."

In the action of the *Wasp* with the *Frolic*, I have adopted James's statement of the latter's force; Professor Soley follows Captain Jones's letter, which gives the brig three additional guns and 18 pounds more metal in broadside. My reason for following James was that his account of the *Frolic's* force agrees with the regular armament of her class. Captain Jones gives her *two* carronades on the topgallant forecastle, which must certainly be a mistake; he makes her chase-guns long 12's, but all the other British brigs carried 6's; he also gives her another gun in broadside, which he calls a 12-pounder, and Lieutenant Biddle (in a letter to his father) a 32-pound carronade. His last gun should perhaps

be counted in; I excluded it because the two American officials differed in their account of it, because I did not know through what port it could be fought, and because James asserted that it was dismounted and lashed to the forecastle. The *Wasp* left port with 138 men; subtracting the pilot and two men who were drowned, makes 135 the number on board during the action. As the battle was fought, I doubt if the loss of the brig's main-yard had much effect on the result; had it been her object to keep on the wind, or had the loss of her after-sails enabled her antagonist to cross her stern (as in the case of the *Argus* and *Pelican*), the accident could fairly be said to have had a decided effect upon the contest. But, as a short time after the fight began the vessels were running nearly free, and as the *Wasp* herself was greatly injured aloft at the time, and made no effort to cross her foe's stern, it is difficult to see that it made much difference. The brig's head-sails were all right, and, as she was not close-hauled, the cause of her not being kept more under command was probably purely due to the slaughter on her decks.

Professor Soley represents the combat of the *States* and *Macedonian* as a plain yard-arm and yard-arm action after the first forty minutes. I have followed the English authorities and make it a running fight throughout. If Professor Soley is

right, the enormous disparity in loss was due mainly to the infinitely greater accuracy of the American fire; according to my diagram, the chief cause was the incompetency of the *Macedonian's* commander. In one event, the difference was mainly in the gunnery of the crews, in the other, it was mainly in the tactical skill of the captains. The question is merely as to how soon Carden, in his headlong, foolishly rash approach, was enabled to close with Decatur. I have represented the closing as taking place later than Professor Soley has done; very possibly, I am wrong. Could my work now be rewritten, I think I should adopt his diagram of the action of the *Macedonian*.

But in the action with the *Java*, it seems to me that he is mistaken. He has here followed the British accounts; but they are contradicted by the American authorities, and, besides, have a very improbable look. When the *Constitution* came round for the second time, on the port tack, James declares the *Java* passed directly across her stern, almost touching, but that the British crew, overcome by astonishment or awe, did not fire a shot; and that shortly afterward the manœuvre was repeated. When this incident is said to have occurred the *Java's* crew had been hard at work fighting the guns for half an hour, and they continued for an hour and a half afterward; it is impossible to believe that they would have forborne

to fire more than one gun when in such a superb position for inflicting damage. Even had the men been struck with temporary lunacy, the officers alone would have fired some of the guns. Moreover, if the courses of the vessels were such as indicated on Professor Soley's diagram, the *Java* would herself have been previously exposed to a terrible raking fire, which was not the case. So the alleged manœuvres have, *per se*, a decidedly apochryphal look; and, besides, they are flatly contradicted by the American accounts which state distinctly that the *Java* remained to windward in every portion of the fight. On this same tack Professor Soley represents the *Java* as forereaching on the *Constitution;* I have reversed this. At this time, the *Java* had been much cut up in her rigging and aloft generally, while the *Constitution* had set much additional sail, and in consequence the latter forged ahead and wore in the smoke unperceived. When the ships came foul, Professor Soley has drawn the *Constitution* in a position in which she would receive a most destructive stern rake from her antagonist's whole broadside. The positions could not have been as there represented. The *Java's* bowsprit came foul in the *Constitution's* mizzen-rigging and as the latter forged ahead she pulled the former gradually round till, when they separated, the ships were in a head and stern line. Commodore

Bainbridge, as he particularly says, at once "kept away to avoid being raked," while the loss of the headsails aboard the *Java* would cause the latter to come up in the wind, and the two ships would again be running parallel, with the American to leeward. I have already discussed fully the reasons for rejecting in this instance, the British report of their own force and loss. This was the last defeat that the British officially reported; the admiralty were smarting with the sting of successive disasters and anxious at all costs to put the best possible face on affairs (as witness Mr. Croker's response to Lord Dundonald's speech in the House). There is every reason for believing that in this case the reports were garbled; exactly as, at a later date, the official correspondence preceding the terrible disaster at Cabul was tampered with before being put before the public (see McCarthy's *History of our Own Times*).

It is difficult to draw a diagram of the action between the *Hornet* and *Peacock*, although it was so short, the accounts contradicting one another as to which ship was to windward and which on the "larboard tack"; and I do not know if I have correctly represented the position of the combatants at the close of the engagement. Lieutenant Conner reported the number of men aboard the *Hornet* fit for duty as 135; Lawrence says she had eight absent in a prize and seven too sick to be at quarters. This

would make an original complement of 150, and tallies exactly with the number of men left on the *Hornet* after the action was over, as mentioned by Lawrence in his account of the total number of souls aboard. The log-book of the *Hornet* just before starting on her cruise states her entire complement as 158; but four of these were sick and left behind. There is still a discrepancy of four men, but during the course of the cruise nothing would be more likely than that four men should be gotten rid of, either by sickness, desertion, or dismissal. At any rate, the discrepancy is very trivial. In her last cruise, as I have elsewhere said, I have probably overestimated the number of the *Hornet's* crew; this seems especially likely when it is remembered that toward the close of the war our vessels left port with fewer supernumeraries aboard than earlier in the contest. If such is the case, the *Hornet* and the *Penguin* were of almost exactly equal force

My own comments upon the causes of our success, upon the various historians of the war, etc., are so similar to those of Professor Soley, that I almost feel as if I had been guilty of plagiarism; yet I never saw his writings till half an hour ago. But, in commenting on the actions of 1812, I think the Professor has laid too much stress on the difference in "dash" between the combatants. The *Wasp* bore down with perfect confidence to

engage an equal foe; and the *Hornet* could not tell till the *Peacock* opened fire that the latter was inferior in force, and moreover fought in sight of another hostile vessel. In the action with the *Guerrière* it was Hull and not Dacres who acted boldly, the Englishman delaying the combat and trying to keep it at long range for some time. In this fight it must be remembered that neither foe knew the exact force of the other until the close work began; then, it is true, Dacres fought most bravely. So with the *Macedonian;* James particularly says that she did not know the force of her foe, and was confident of victory. The *Java*, however, must have known that she was to engage a superior force. In neither of the first two frigate actions did the Americans have a chance to display any courage in the actual fighting, the victory was won with such ease. But in each case they entered as bravely, although by no means as rashly or foolishly, into the fight as their antagonists did. It must always be remembered that, until this time, it was by no means proved that 24-pounders were better guns than 18's to put on frigates; exactly as, at a little later date, it was vigorously contended that 42-pounders were no more effective guns for two-deckers than 32-pounders were. Till 1812, there had been no experience to justify the theory that the 24-pounder was the better gun. So that, in

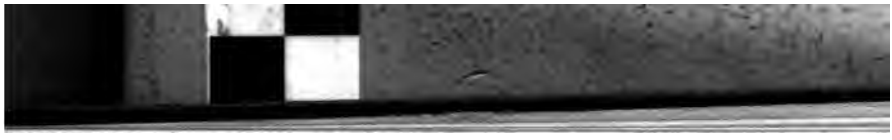
the first five actions, it cannot be said that the British showed any especial courage in *beginning* the fight; it was more properly to be called ignorance. After the fight was once begun, they certainly acted very bravely, and, in particular, the desperate nature of the *Frolic's* defence has never been surpassed.

But, admitting this is a very different thing from admitting that the British fought more bravely than their foes; the combatants were about on a par in this respect. The Americans, it seems to me, were always to the full as ready to engage as their antagonists were; on each side there were few over-cautious men, such as Commodore Rodgers and Sir George Collier, the opposing captains on Lake Ontario, the commander of the *Bonne Citoyenne*, and, perhaps, Commodore Decatur; but, as a rule, either side jumped at the chance of a fight. The difference in tactics was one of skill and common sense, not one of timidity. The *United States* did not "avoid close action" from over-caution, but simply to take advantage of her opponent's rashness. Hull's approach was as bold as it was skilful; had the opponent to leeward been the *Endymion* instead of the *Guerrière*, her 24-pounders would not have saved her from the fate that overtook the latter. Throughout the war I think that the Americans were as bold in beginning action, and as stubborn in continuing it, as

were their foes—although no more so. Neither side can claim any superiority on the average, though each can, in individual cases, as regards courage. Foolhardiness does not imply bravery. A prize-fighter who refused to use his guard would be looked upon as exceptionally brainless, not as exceptionally brave; yet such a case is almost exactly parallel to that of the captain of the *Macedonian*.

APPENDIX D

In the *Historical Register of the United States* (edited by T. H. Palmer, Philadelphia, 1814), vol. i., p. 105 (State Papers), is a letter from Lieut. L. H. Babbitt to Master-commandant Wm. U. Crane, both of the *Nautilus*, dated September 13, 1812, in which he says that, of the six men imprisoned by the British on suspicion of being of English birth, four were native-born Americans, and two naturalized citizens. He also gives a list of six men who deserted, and entered on the *Shannon*, of whom two were American born—the birthplaces of the four others not being given. Adding these last, we still have but six men as the number of British aboard the *Nautilus*. It is thus seen that the crack frigate *Shannon* had American deserters aboard her—



although these probably formed a merely trifling fraction of her crew, as did the British deserters aboard the crack frigate *Constitution*.

On p. 108, is a letter of December 17, 1812, from Geo. S. Wise, purser of the *Wasp*, stating that twelve of that ship's crew had been detained "under the pretence of their being British subjects"; so that nine per cent. of her crew may have been British—or the proportion may have been very much smaller.

On p. 117, is a letter of January 14, 1813, from Commodore J. Rodgers, in which he states that he encloses the muster-rolls of H. B. M. ships *Moselle* and *Sappho*, taken out of the captured packet *Swallow;* and that these muster-rolls show that in August, 1812, one eighth of the crews of the *Moselle* and *Sappho* was composed of Americans.

These various letters thus support strongly the conclusions reached on a former page as to the proportion of British deserters on American vessels.

In *A Biographical Memoir of the late Commodore Joshua Barney, from Autographical Notes and Journals* (edited by Mary Barney, Boston, 1832), on pages 263 and 315, are descriptions of the flotilla destroyed in the Patuxent. It consisted of one gunboat, carrying a long 24; one cutter, carrying a long 18, a columbiad 18, and four 9-pound

carronades; and thirteen row-barges, each carrying a long 18 or 12 in the bow, with a 32-pound or 18-pound carronade in the stern. On page 256, Barney's force in St. Leonard's creek, is described as consisting of one sloop, two gunboats, and thirteen barges, with, in all, somewhat over 500 men; and it is claimed that the flotilla drove away the blockading frigates entirely unaided, the infantry force on shore rendering no assistance. The work is of some value, as showing that James had more than doubled the size, and almost doubled the strength, of Barney's various gunboats.

It may be mentioned, that on page 108, Commodore Barney describes the Dutch-American frigate *South Carolina*, which carried a crew of 550 men, and was armed with twenty-eight long 42's on the main deck, and twelve long 12's on the-spar deck. She was far heavier than any of our 44-gun frigates of 1812, and an overmatch for anything under the rank of a 74. This gives further emphasis to what I have already stated—that the distinguishing feature of the War of 1812 is not the introduction of the heavy frigate, for heavy frigates had been in use among various nations for thirty years previously, but the fact that for the first time the heavy frigate was used to the best possible advantage.

APPENDIX E

In the last edition of James's *Naval History of Great Britain*, published in London, in 1886, by Richard Bentley & Son, there is an appendix by Mr. H. T. Powell, devoted to the War of 1812, mainly to my account thereof.

Mr. Powell begins by stating with naïve solemnity that "most British readers will be surprised to learn that, notwithstanding the infinite pains taken by William James to render his history a monument of accuracy, and notwithstanding the exposure he brought upon contemporary misstatements, yet to this day the Americans still dispute his facts." It is difficult to discuss seriously any question with a man capable of writing down in good faith such a sentence as the above. James (unlike Brenton and Cooper) knew perfectly well how to be accurate; but if Mr. Powell will read the comments on his accounts which I have appended to the description of almost every battle, he will see that James stands convicted beyond possibility of doubt, not merely of occasional inaccuracies or errors, but of the systematic, malicious, and continuous practice of every known form of wilful misstatement, from the suppression of the truth and the suggestion of the false to the lie direct. To a man of his character, the temptation was irresistible; for when he came to our

naval war, he had to appear as the champion of the beaten side and to explain away defeat instead of chronicling victory. The contemporary American writers were quite as boastful and untruthful. No honorable American should at this day endorse their statements; and, similarly, no reputable Englishman should permit his name to be associated in any way with James's book without explicitly disclaiming all share in, or sympathy with, its scurrilous mendacity.

Mr. Powell's efforts to controvert my statements can be disposed of in short order. He first endeavors to prove that James was right about the tonnage of the ships; but all that he does is to show that his author gave for the English frigates and sloops the correct tonnage by English and French rules. This I never for a moment disputed. What I said was that the *comparative* tonnage of the various pairs of combatants, as given by James, was all wrong; and this Mr. Powell does not even discuss. James applied one system correctly to the English vessels; but he applied quite another to the American (especially on the lakes). Mr. Powell actually quotes Admiral Chads as a witness, because he says that his father considered James's account of the *Java's* fight accurate; if he wishes such testimony, I can produce many relatives of the Perrys, Porters, and Rodgerses of 1812, who insist that I have

done much less than justice to the American side. He says I passed over silently James's schedule of dimensions of the frigates and sloops. This is a mistake; I showed by the testimony of Captains Biddle and Warrington and Lieutenant Hoffman that his *comparative* measurements (the absolute measurements being of no consequence) for the American and British sloops are all wrong; and the same holds true of the frigates.

Mr. Powell deals with the weight of shot exactly as he does with the tonnage—that is, he seeks to show what the *absolute* weight of the British shot was; but he does not touch upon the point at issue, the *comparative* weight of the British and American shot.

When he comes to the lake actions, Mr. Powell is driven to conclude that what I aver must be accurate, because he thinks the *Confiance* was the size of the *General Pike* (instead of half as large again; she mounted 30 guns in battery on her main-deck, as against the *Pike's* 26, and stood to the latter as the *Constellation* did to the *Essex*), and because an American writer (very properly) expresses dissatisfaction with Commodore Chauncy! What Mr. Powell thinks this last statement tends to prove would be difficult to say. In the body of my work I go into the minute details of the strength of the combatants in the lake action; I clearly show that James was guilty

of gross and wilful falsification of the truth; and no material statement I make can be successfully controverted.

So much for Mr. Powell. But a much higher authority, Mr. Frank Chiswell, has recently published some articles which tend to show that my conclusions as to the tonnage of the sea vessels (not as to the lake vessels, which are taken from different sources) are open to question. In the appendix to my first edition I myself showed that it was quite impossible to reconcile all the different statements; that the most that could be done was to take one method and apply it all through, admitting that even in this way it would be impossible to make all the cases square with one another.

Mr. Chiswell states that "the American tonnage measurements, properly taken, never could give results for frigates varying largely from the English tonnage." But a statement like this is idle; for the answer to the "never could" is that they *did*. If Mr. Chiswell will turn to James's *Naval Occurrences*, he will find the *Chesapeake* set down as of 1135 tons, and the *Macedonian* as of 1081; but in the American navy lists, which are those I followed, the *Chesapeake* is put down as of 1244 tons. A simple application of the rule of three shows that even if I accepted James's figures, I would be obliged to consider the *Mace-*

donian as of about 1185 tons, to make her correspond with the system I had adopted for the American ships.

But this is not all. James gives the length of the *Macedonian* as 154 feet 6 inches. In the Navy Department at Washington are two plans of the *Macedonian*. One is dated 1817, and gives her length as 157 ft. 3 in. This difference in measurement would make a difference of 20 odd tons; so that by the American mode she must certainly have been over 1200 tons, instead of under 1100, as by the British rules. The second plan in the Navy Department, much more elaborate than the first, is dated 1829, and gives the length as 164 ft.; it is probably this that Emmons and the United States Navy lists have followed—as I did myself in calling the tonnage of the *Macedonian* 1325. Since finding the plan of 1817, however, I think it possible that the other refers to the second vessel of the name, which was built in 1832. If this is true, then the *Macedonian* (as well as the *Guerrière* and *Java*) should be put down as about 120 tons less than the measurements given by Emmons and adopted by me; but even if this is so, she must be considered as tonning over 1200, using the method I have applied to the *Chesapeake*. Therefore, adopting the same system that I applied to the American 38-gun frigates, the British

38-gun frigates were of over 1200 not under 1100 tons.

As for the *Cyane*, James makes her but 118 ft. and 2 in. long, while the American *Peacock* he puts at 119 ft. 5 in. But Lieutenant Hoffman's official report makes the former 123 ft. 3 in., and the plans in the State Department at Washington make the latter 117 ft. 11 in. in length. I care nothing for the different methods of measuring different vessels; what I wish to get at is the comparative measurement, and this stands as above. The comparative tonnage is thus the very reverse of that indicated by James's figures.

Finally, as to the brigs, James makes them some ten feet shorter than the American ship-sloops. In the Washington archives I can find no plan on record of the measurements of the captured *Epervier;* but in the Navy Department, volume x of the *Letters of Masters-Commandant*, 1814, under date of May 12th, is the statement of the Surveyor of the Port of Charleston that she measured 467 tons (in another place it is given as 477). James makes her 388; but as he makes the American *Wasp* 434, whereas she stands on our list as of 450, the application of the same rule as with the frigates gives us, even taking his own figures, 400 as her tonnage, when measured as our ships were. But the measurements of the Surveyor of the Port who examined the *Eper-*

vier are corroborated by the statements of Capt. Biddle, who captured her sister brig, the *Penguin*. Biddle reported that the latter was two feet shorter and a little broader than his own ship, the *Hornet*, which was of 480 tons. This would correspond almost exactly with the Surveyor's estimate.

It still seems impossible to reconcile all these conflicting statements; but I am inclined to think that, on the whole, in the sea (not the lake) vessels I have put the British tonnage too high. On the scale I have adopted for the American 44-gun and 38-gun frigates, and 18-gun sloops like the *Hornet* and *Wasp*, the British 38-gun frigates ought to be put down as of a little over 1200, and the British 18-gun sloops as of between 400 and 450 tons. In other words, of the twelve single-ship actions of the war, five—those of the *Chesapeake* and *Shannon*, *Enterprise* and *Boxer*, *Wasp* and *Frolic*, *Hornet* and *Peacock*, *Hornet* and *Penguin*—were between vessels of nearly equal size; in six, the American was the superior about in the proportion of five to four (rather more in the case of the frigates, rather less in the case of the brigs); and in one, that of the *Argus* and *Pelican*, the British sloop was the bigger, in a somewhat similar ratio.

This correction would be in favor of the British. But in a more important particular, I think I have

done injustice to the Americans. I should have allowed for the short weight of American metal on the lakes, taking off seven per cent. from the nominal broadsides of Perry and Macdonough; for the American ordnance was of exactly the same quality as that on the ocean vessels, while the British was brought over from England, and must have shown the same superiority that obtained on the sea-going ships.

Moreover, I am now inclined to believe that both the *Guerrière* and the *Java*, which were originally French ships, still carried French 18's on their main-deck, and that, therefore, about 20 pounds should be added to the broadside weight of metal of each. The American accounts stated this to be the case in both instances; but I paid no heed to them until my attention was called to the fact that the English had captured enormous quantities of French cannon and shot and certainly used the captured ordnance on some of their ships.

In writing my history, I have had to deal with a mass of confused and contradictory testimony, which it has sometimes been quite impossible to reconcile, the difficulty being greatly enhanced by the calculated mendacity of James and some others of the earlier writers, both American and British. Often I have had to simply balance probabilities, and choose between two sets of fig-

ures, aware that, whichever I chose, much could be said against the choice. It has, therefore, been quite impossible to avoid errors; but I am confident they have been as much in favor of the British as the Americans; and in all important points my statements are substantially accurate.

I do not believe that my final conclusions on the different fights can be disputed. James asserts that the American ships were officered by cunning cowards, and manned, to the extent of half their force in point of effectiveness, by renegade British. I show that the percentage of non-American seamen aboard the American ships was probably but little greater than the percentage of non-British seamen aboard the British ships; and as for the charges of cowardice, there were but two instances in which it could be fairly urged against a beaten crew—that of the British *Epervier* and that of the American *Argus* (for the cases of Sir George Collier, Commodore Rodgers, Chauncy, Yeo, the commander of the *Bonne Citoyenne*, etc., cannot be considered as coming under this head). James states that there was usually a great superiority of force on the side of the Americans this is true; but I show that it was not nearly as great as he makes it, and that in dealing with the lake flotillas his figures are absolutely false, to the extent of even reversing the relative strength of the combatants on Lake Champlain,

where the Americans won, although with an inferior force. In the one noteworthy British victory, that of the *Shannon*, all British authors fail to make any allowance for the vital fact that the *Shannon's* crew had been drilled for seven years, whereas the *Chesapeake* had an absolutely new crew, and had been out of port just eight hours; yet such a difference in length of drill is more important than disparity in weight of metal.

As a whole, it must be said that both sides showed equal courage and resolution; that the Americans usually possessed the advantage in material force; and that they also showed a decided superiority in fighting skill, notably in markmanship.

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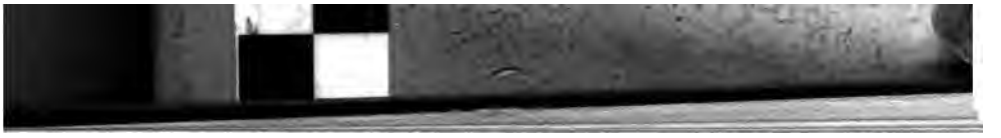

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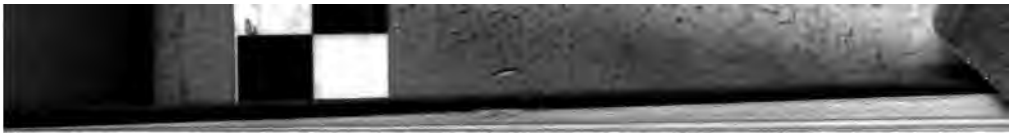

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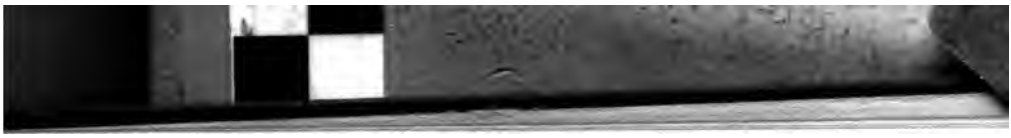

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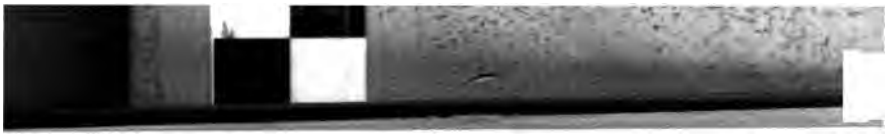

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